

SHS/LHHS Message

Good morning SCSD Parents/Guardians,

School safety and security is a topic that is at the forefront as we wrestle with recent tragedies around our nation. As we reflect on the recent event in Florida, our hearts go out to the victims, families, students and staff in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School community. In response, our students have planned to create a large poster on which SHS students can write a message to the students from Parkland. They can also choose to join in a group photo after school on March 13 which will be sent to Parkland along with the poster.

The Stanwood-Camano School District will not officially plan nor participate in the National School Walkout planned on March 14 (description below) although some students have expressed their intent to participate. We understand students' desire to stand in solidarity with their peers across the nation to express their concerns and take some kind of action to help prevent future incidents of school violence.

What is the National School Walkout?

For 17 minutes at 10 a.m. across each time zone on March 14, students around the world will walk out of their schools to honor those killed in the massacre at the Parkland High School earlier this year and to protest gun violence (www.foxnews.com).

Demonstrations like these are an expression of students' free speech rights and as such, we are obliged to respect students' choice to exercise their rights. During these kinds of demonstrations, school staff will be present to monitor students to ensure their safety and to also ensure that there is not a disruption to the learning environments in our schools. But to be clear, these demonstrations are not school or district sponsored. Students who participate do so voluntarily. Furthermore, just as the rights of students to participate in protests are respected, we also respect the rights of students who choose not to participate in any kind of student-organized protests. Students who elect to walk out of class will need to have pre-arranged parent/guardian permission per our attendance policy. Without parent/guardian permission, normal attendance rules will apply.

We want to reassure everyone that our schools will be functioning normally; we will work to maintain effective learning environments, and we expect our staff members to support ALL students -- those who do participate and those who do not participate. Teachers will be expected to perform their normal professional duties in the classroom setting.

Our district is creating a school safety advisory committee consisting of school staff, parents, community members, students, police and fire personnel. The committee will learn what is currently in place and planned for the near future throughout the district. Then the committee will complete research and discuss what can be done to make our schools even safer. The committee can consider physical or technological upgrades to buildings as well as ways to support our students socially and emotionally. They will make recommendations on how our district can better address school safety and security and how to better prepare our school staff and students to respond in the event of an actual incident.

We encourage you to have conversations with your students about these important issues and what it means to choose to participate in a walkout or not. Please do not hesitate to contact your student's school if you have questions or concerns.