

# Ontario-Montclair

## School District

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*Superintendent*

March 9, 2018

Dear OMSD families,

We are writing to provide you with some information regarding student interest in expressing their feelings on the tragedy that took place on February 14, 2018, at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. We join the nation in continuing to mourn for the victims. We also applaud the brave and courageous actions being taken by the survivors and their families.

Several media outlets and many social media posts have announced a planned student walkout on March 14<sup>th</sup> and April 20<sup>th</sup>. We want you to know that our school principals have been in touch with our students and their site staff to discuss ideas students may have regarding this very important topic. Our goal is to provide students with an opportunity to engage, learn, and express themselves in a safe and productive manner where all perspectives can be heard, explored and understood. We absolutely support any student in their desire to express themselves and are proud of their efforts to lead a dialogue toward action.

Ensuring our schools continue to be safe places for our students and staff remains a top priority for the District. Schools in the Ontario-Montclair School District practice emergency response plans frequently. Our trainings include working directly with the Ontario and Montclair Police Departments. We also have crisis counselors and teams available to help our students and families who need support with social-emotional and other non-instructional issues.

We constantly practice and refine our procedures for keeping kids safe from all threats while they are in school, but our authority and ability to keep them safe ends when they leave the campus. The safest place for your child to make their voices heard is on campus. Leaving campus gives you and them no measure of safety. We encourage you to continue your family conversations about this important issue and to stress the importance of your children making their voices heard in the safe space we provide on campus.

As our students work with their school principals, teachers, and support staff about expressing their ideas and feelings, I am confident that their voices will be heard regarding the very important topic of school safety.

Sincerely,



James Q. Hammond, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

**“Our Community, Our Children, Our Commitment, Our Future”**