

## EducationPlus School Safety Meeting

March 5, 2018

### Member Districts in Attendance:

Afton	Lindbergh	Ritenour
Clayton	Mehlville	Rockwood
Ferguson Florissant	Normandy	St. Charles
Festus	Northwest	University City
Fox	Orchard Farm	Washington
Kirkwood	Parkway	Wentzville
Ladue	Pattonville	

Resources were shared with the group (PowerPoint presentation will be shared with districts)

Discussion around collecting safety statistics of area schools.

### Each district shared their current plans/best practices. Some common themes emerged:

- Superintendent meeting with student groups to provide student voice
- Principals meeting with student leaders to plan for safety and support
- Identify space to keep students safe- cafeteria, gym, auditorium, football field (avoid being in the front of the building for security)
- Engage local police officials for security purposes
- Meet with student leaders to outline programming-students come with ideas and administrators help direct their thoughts
- Communicate expectations and consequences (be consistent)
- Coordinate staff for supervision-some walk out with students and others stay in class with students who don't participate
- Create talking points for teachers (work to ensure that all teachers are using the same language)
- Send communication to parents
- Educate students on civil disobedience and what is meant by a peaceful protest
- Keep focus away for politics and focused on student safety

The group broke into working groups to discuss best practices and brainstorm ideas around the following subject areas:

- [Overall school/student safety](#)
- [Logistics around walkout](#)
- [Internal Communications](#)
- [External Communications \(with a focus on social media\)](#)
- [Repurposing Walkout Event](#)

## NOTES FROM BREAKOUT GROUPS

### Overall School/Student Safety:

Student physical location – inside or out?

- Believe it may be easier because they see the need for their safety

- Goal is to keep inside but example of using stadium one district's case though also wouldn't want to put students in danger
- This time there hasn't been a lot of talk about this across the system
  - Different than Brown or Stockley
  - May change the venue from outside to in
  - Don't let others inside past a certain spot
- How does it look if the student body is adamant about walking out?
  - Given the facility - don't really have a choice with gym separate from building
    - How to block off visitors at that time
    - District has been communicating
    - Target because central venue of community
    - Want the same procedures in place as have used previously
  - If 700 walkout it is hard to stop them regardless of the geography/layout of the physical plant
- If students do leave, it is important to document who left and to let the parents know their students left the premises.
  - Not as concerned at high school level versus elementary level
- Received a lot of feedback about wanting students to be safe at that time
- What if they leave and come back on?
  - Students walkout, others walk with them, then follow them back in – how do you deal with the letting back in
  - If you leave campus that is different than the walkout portion (all of the things that can be done/planned for)
  - Other agreed that yes, that would be different – though consequences could be identified through handbook/behavior guide because that is different
  - Will be pushing to keep the movement on the inside of the building because once they leave (even in parking lot) you just don't know what else can become a part of it.
- Reinforced that reason to stay in is to keep them safe not trying to restrain them in their speech
  - Student communication to administrators is the best thing that helps/promotes their safety in these instances or in others.
- Communicate with the kids and direct them to where the safe spot is – whether inside or out
- Staff involvement – how addressing if they want to participate
  - Supt. communicated why it is important for staff to stay in the classroom and teach. Staff on plan that hour will help with supervision. When they requested it, supt reinforced that this is about students not staff.
- Parent involvement – if inside then they can't get in/aren't involved
  - Communication ahead of time – for safety reasons we are keeping students inside
- Not worth it to grab students if trying to leave, if trying let them
- Once done – revisit what is this about – what were they walking out for
- Administrators need to know where this is starting from – adults can then work with the kids to know where they are and then they can work to shape a message.
- Concerns expressed of students being outside in areas that cannot be secured (wooded, conservation areas)
- Recognize the importance of working with law enforcement
- Social media can shape what it becomes – possibly more fluid by the time it happens – e.g., I want to walkout to support the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment
- What if more than just students show up on those days? Also – hard to know if 14<sup>th</sup> will be more or less than the 20<sup>th</sup>
- Lesson learned from other event– no signs – it spurred other issues when they were present
- Students signing banner as a way to express voice and towards supporting Parkland as a way to try and make it positive.

- Focusing on how do I secure our school every day –trying to make it as safe as possible every day for our students

#### Report out talking points:

- Inside or out – what if students are adamant about going out
  - Issues of difficulty of securing the external setting
- If outside and then they leave the physical campus
  - Documenting who and communicating back with parents
- Staff that want to participate
  - Supt communicated why this about the student’s voice and not the staffs – i.e. this is about the kids not the adults
- Process with students after the fact – what was this about – what were they walking out for, what did they learn, now what?
- Administrators and teachers are key to knowing where this is coming from and where the students are at – things may become more fluid as the dates approach.

### **Walkout Logistics:**

- **Establish guidelines** (with student leaders)-time, locations, safety/security, and support while lending flexibility in activity
- **Create safe space**-cafeteria, gym, auditorium, football field
- **Student supervision**-collaborate with local law enforcement, create buddy classrooms to supervise those staying in class and those walking out
- **Consequences**-varied district response (unexcused absence to no consequence), established tiered consequences (consequences for disruptive or undesirable behavior)
- **Communicate**
  - Staff
    - School administration stance on rally/protest
    - Anticipated timeline of events
    - Expectation of staff prior, during, and after event
  - Students
    - Foster student leaders to facilitate peaceful and constructive activity
    - Expectations for students participating
    - Consequences of disruptive or undesirable behavior
  - Parents/community
    - Safety measures
    - Learning outcomes (for those participating and those not)
    - Expectations for students participating
- **Activities during rally/protest**- Help students focus purpose-make 17 new friends, write letters of support to FL families, read bios of 17 victims, learn about acts of civil disobedience
- **Teachable moments**-prepare teachers to engage in real-time conversations (resources linked below)
  - [Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom](#) - A guide for finding teaching opportunities when students bring up difficult issues or say things that offend others in the class.
  - [Leading Classroom Discussion on Difficult Topics](#) - A resource on intentional strategies to help students deal with difficult subjects and how professors can prepare for facilitating difficult conversations.
  - [Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most](#) - A summary of Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen (1999), *Difficult conversations: how to discuss what matters most*. They provide a step-by-step approach to having difficult conversations.
  - [Difficult Dialogues](#) - A presentation by Tasha Souza, PhD, Humboldt State University. Tools, strategies, and guidelines for having constructive conversations on challenging topics.

- [Facilitating Diverse Conversations](#) - Diversity Awareness Partnership offers a one-page document helping facilitators frame difficult conversations.
- **Be proactive**-create mediums for reporting, sharing information, and keeping students safe all year long (safe lines, drop box, etc.)
- **Middle School**-create a plan but only employ if needed

## **Internal Communications:**

### **Students:**

- Proactively reach out to student leaders, president of student clubs and possibly student social media leaders. Let communications to other students go out organically through student leaders. Encourage some type of RSVPs/commitment to understand numbers.
- Try not to be too specific so you don't paint yourself into the corner. Too many details on the information can also lead to more issues.
- Every district is different on discipline issue. For some school districts, walkouts can be very frequent so it's important to be consistent with discipline issues. For some school districts, this is rare so not establishing any discipline parameter. One additional option is to ask kids to write-up something about the experience to forgo discipline.
- Try to keep students focused on key issues and their outcome.
- Give them ideas on other ways to demonstrate their voice. Write a letter, etc.
- **Key message:** Priority is always to keep students in class.

### **Faculty:**

- Communicate with staff/faculty about Before | During | After:
  - Conversations staff should be having with students before the event, i.e. civil disobedience, peaceful protest, civil discourse.
  - What faculty should do AND should not do during the process.
  - After the event – what are the discussions/communications when students come back and what will be the policy for students who peacefully walk out.
- Tell teachers to assume a student will be videotaping their response & actions.
- Share with faculty any communications that are being sent to parents and talking points around that communications.
- Consider bringing in outside agencies for staff meetings to help teachers & administrators prepare for these discussions.
- **Key message:** Staff priority should be supervision of students.

### **School board:**

- Communicate with board about expectations for staff and provided the parameters established for students. Try not to be too specific but give general ideas of approach.
- First, always want to keep students in class and the safety of students and faculty.
- **Key message:** First priority is to keep kids in class; and to keep students and faculty safe.

## **External Communications:**

### **Social Media Monitoring**

- **Software / Applications**
  - Could use and help monitor

- Some tried, but reality is community monitoring and student / community support worked better than trying to track
- Resource used & suggested <http://psst.com>
- **Specific Social Media**
  - Monitor, however unlikely to catch most due to restrictions, privacy and timing
    - Snapchat
    - Facebook
    - Instagram stories
    - Encourage screenshots of good / bad
    - FB LIVE - perhaps discourage, hard to monitor and track
- **Current trends**
  - Hard to follow, so perhaps suggest:
    - Use of National Hashtag #Enough; as well as
    - Use of Local Hashtag #\* specific to school / district
- **Student / Community**
  - Eyes & Ears
  - Anonymous reporting
  - Some have access buttons on their websites to resources, google form for sharing suggestions, etc
  - Could use Geotagging if students promote through Social Media with this turned on, otherwise there will be no way to determine “where” unless stated in post

**Pre / Post Communications:**

- Send who, when, where, what will happen before
- Send after, who, when, where what did happen --- include data & celebrations
- Create separate / edit communications for Elem, MS, HS, Community, Parents, BOE, etc.
- **Parent / Community News (K-12)**
  - Reminders of policies / no different from current policies / practices
  - Expectations
  - Procedures
  - Consequences
  - Students only - no parents / community members during school hours
  - Elem / MS / HS
    - Do not post on websites - eNews & social media postings only
- **Media & Community Involvement**
  - **Designate a safe space off or near campus**
    - Examples - Clayton and Parkland
  - **Tips and Tricks**
    - For students on how to handle media
    - Professional dress
    - Note they may be recorded & archived
    - Speaking from notes vs emotions
    - Focus on issue / student voice / anti-violence, not political
- **Staff Engagement**
  - How to train and support staff - this is about student voice, the teacher personal perspectives need to remain silent
  - Help to create same message - bullet points
    - SRO - Counselors - Teachers
    - Student focus
- **Student Leadership**

- Engage student leaders and clubs / organizations
- Create safe place
- Allow student voice
- Advocate
- Add voter registration for positive twist
- Add Computer stations to register to vote / sign up for follow-up / further involvement
- Focus on Anti - Student Violence

### **Alternative & Next Practices**

- **Repurpose Focus**

- Walk Out vs Talk Out
- Repurpose passion and energy with action steps
- Create videos
- Host chats
- Communication consistently about students
- Educational Value & Instructional Meaning

- **Climate & Culture**

- Addressing behaviors
- Encouraging alternative strategies
- Walk Outs Vs Talk Outs --- teach conversation strategies / peaceful resolutions
- Conversational points of interest - Crucial conversations
- Student voice & advocacy

- **Outside Resources**

- ACLU
- MOSPRA
- NSPRA
- EdPlus
- Google Folder Ritenour downloaded and willing to share with others

### **Collaborative / Regional Alignment & Support**

- **Shared Talking Points**

- **Broadly / General Terms**

- Teachable Moment
- Instructional / Educational focus / connections
- Staff available to listen
- Different context - Different agendas -- be ready for general responses vs specific answers & solutions

- **Specific to school / district**

- Follow policies or not
- Practices similar to past experiences (Ferguson, Stockley, etc)
- Common talking points within schools/districts
- Flexible to meet all needs of community / school climate

- **Stakeholders Messages**

- Include process & policies OR not followed
- Different message based on client / stakeholder & actionable items if necessary
- Include resources & possible next steps
  - BOE
  - Student - each level (Elem, MS, HS)
  - PTO
  - Parents

- Community

## **Repurposing the Event:**

- Know the WHY and purpose behind the students plan (and your plan)
  - Help the leaders ensure their actions/plans are connected to the WHY
  - Combatting Social Media #National School Walkout Day vs. a Repurposed Day
    - Once again....focus the students on the WHY
- School Sponsored vs. School Supported
  - This is murky
  - Pros and Cons on both sides
  - How much support from Admin is enough and how much is too much?
  - Balance between planning and structure and student led voice and choice
- Student Voice
  - Meet with Leadership Groups
  - View their agenda of day – explain to students we need to be part of this planning to ensure our WHY – student safety and limit amount of time out of class and to have class coverage if and when necessary
  - Discuss options to participate or not
  - Letter to parents could be written by the students explaining their WHY
- IDEAS
  - 17....
    - 17 seconds of silence
    - 17 students registered to vote
    - 17 letters to Florida
    - Meet 17 students you didn't know
  - BACKPACK: honoring the students and parents from Parkland
    - Read the bios of the 17 dead students out loud
    - Writing letters to the families of the 17 and fill the 17 backpacks
    - This idea is from Northwest HS
  - Middle School: DAY OF VOICE
    - This could build capacity of the students for the next event
- Regardless of our response....What kind of precedent are we setting for future events? Will this response be expected every time
- Curricular Extensions:
  - Debate skills and how to agree and disagree respectfully
  - View the tapes of the Parkland students presentations