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Alhambra USD Guidelines for National Walk-Out to Prevent School Violence on Wednesday, March 14th

Student safety first, balanced with right to freedom-of-speech, goals of the day

The Alhambra Unified School District, along with community policing partners, is working to create a safe and positive environment for students and staff on Wednesday, March 14th for the National Student Walk-Out to Prevent School Violence.

The AUSD Guidelines for Families from Dr. Laurel Bear are posted on the website, www.ausd.us. The plan is the result of collaboration on every level, internally and externally.

While AUSD's first mission must always be to safeguard the 17,000 students and 2,500 employees on our 19 campuses, the District recognizes the right to freedom of expression.

Against a backdrop safety-first, the District views the 17-minute National Walk-Out, from 10:00 am to 10:17 am, as a teaching opportunity for students, a chance for them to develop their critical thinking skills, no matter their view. School will begin and end on time, with minimal disruption to class instruction.

We ask that students remain on campus, gathering at the designated site on each campus if they wish to honor the 17 lives lost at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14th and show support for the campaign to prevent school violence. At each campus, student leaders and school administrators have created projects and forums to provide a basis for meaningful conversation about the issues.

We ask that students act in keeping with a remembrance of lives lost and that they use their right to freedom of expression responsibly so as put neither themselves nor anyone else at risk. Students and employees may wear orange to show their solidarity for the prevention campaign.

"We are urging families to visit our www.ausd.us website for AUSD Guidelines for the National Student Walk-Out on Wednesday, March 14th," says Dr. Laurel Bear, AUSD Assistant Superintendent of Student + Employee Welfare. Bear adds, "We ask parents to talk with their children about the 10:00 am to 10:17 am event, and encourage their students to stay on campus, gathering at specified sites on each campus." School safety, Bear points out, begins with respect for one another and grows in a culture of civility.

Alhambra Police Chief, Timothy Vu adds, "As an active AUSD partner, Alhambra PD works closely with the AUSD and their Gateway to Success mental health and safety program to provide a safe

environment for students to exercise their right to freedom of expression. On March 14th, we want students to have safe, peaceful, consequential on-campus conversations with one another and their teachers about school safety. There will be a highly visible police presence on all 19 AUSD campuses to ensure the safety of the nearly 20,000 people on these campuses. We can best accomplish this when students stay on campus.”

Captain Kelly Gordon at Monterey Park PD echoes these views, saying “On March 14th, Monterey Park PD, working in tandem with AUSD, APD and San Gabriel PD, is dedicated to keeping AUSD students and employees safe which then will allow students to have a positive learning experience if they choose to honor the 17 lives lost in Parkland, FL. We ask parents to encourage their children to remain on campus during the 17-minute, 10:00 am-10:17 am, Walk-Out.”

AUSD Superintendent Denise Jaramillo applauds the entire AUSD team and the local police departments who are involved in making all 19 campuses safe for students and employees for the March 14th National Student Walk-Out. “The security coordination for 20,000 people is a demanding process. Because we have such a committed AUSD team and superb community policing partners, the 17-minute Walk-Out will allow students their freedom of expression in a peaceful positive manner.”