

SOUTH WESTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT

225 Bowman Road

Hanover, PA 17331

www.swsd.k12.pa.us

March 12, 2018

Dear SWSD Parents/Guardians:

Over the past few weeks a national non-violent demonstration movement protesting school violence has surfaced. The protests are scheduled for Wednesday, March 14, 2018.

The South Western School District is not promoting any event scheduled for this date. The students will be organizing and leading any and all of the efforts. However, students, as part of their First Amendment rights may participate in these events. The district will ensure the supervision of any students who are not interested in participating.

The district believes the safest place for students is in the classroom during the school day. However, as part of this non-violent protest, students who are going to participate in any organized event are being encouraged to leave the classroom to gather at a predetermined location on the school district campus. The school district believes gathering outside would expose students to additional risks. While we are encouraging and providing students a place to gather indoors, we are, nonetheless, making plans to protect students should they exit the building during this time period.

Any student who operates outside the guidelines established by administration will be subject to discipline that exceeds a warning. The guidelines of the administration include the following:

- At 10 a.m., if students choose, students may proceed respectfully to the cafeteria. Administrators will be in the cafeteria for supervision and to ensure student safety.
- At the end of the 17 minutes, students who have chosen to go to the cafeteria will have five minutes to respectfully return to class. Students who fail to return to their classroom in a timely manner will be in violation of the code of conduct and will be subject to the consequences associated with such actions.
- Students who choose to go to the cafeteria during those 17 minutes will be responsible for any work missed.
- Staff with assigned duties during that timeframe will remain in their respective classrooms to continue teaching with the students who do not wish to go to the cafeteria.
- Students will not be permitted to leave the building out of safety and security concerns. A student choosing to leave the building will be in violation of the code of conduct and will be subject to the consequences associated with such actions.

As a parent/guardian there are several options available to you on this date. They include:

- Apply for an educational trip to take your student to a rally or event on this issue

- Keep your student at home on the day of this publicized event. Absences will be excused by the district as long as proper documentation and procedures outlined in the student handbook are followed

Our district recognizes we are living in a time where there are many diverse and often opposing viewpoints. So, we are asking you, our parents/guardians, to assist us by talking with your students about civility, respect and appropriate discourse. We also ask if you have concerns regarding this day or the events, please contact your school office and share your concerns. We are encouraging you to refrain from taking your displeasure/concerns to social media outlets, it does not permit the parties to have meaningful dialogue. As always, we appreciate your assistance during these times.

In closing, I would like to thank our community, students, emergency responders, school board members, staff, and administration for their collaboration and support as we work to keep our students safe. If you have any concerns, we ask you to contact your school administrator, school counselors, staff member or myself at your earliest convenience.

Thank you.

Jay Burkhart

Jay H. Burkhart, D.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools