

February 28, 2018

Dear Students, Staff and Parents/Guardians,

As you may know, organizers of the Women's March are promoting a "National School Walkout" at 10:00 am on March 14th, 2018. The purpose is to "demand Congress pass legislation to keep us safe from gun violence at our schools, on our streets and in our homes and places of worship."

MSAD#13/RSU83 school leaders met on February 27th to discuss this issue starting with referencing legal counsel regarding participation in this event.

Our discussion included the following:

We have great reservations about exposing students across the nation to an announced presence outside of locked classrooms and locked buildings considering safety concerns.

The First Amendment prohibits governmental entities from viewpoint discrimination. Students and staff having views differing from those of the Walkout would have to have an equal opportunity to express their views. Scheduling a pause in the school day only for those supporting the goals of the Walkout would be legally problematic for the District.

Students and staff do not have a First Amendment right to disrupt or interrupt the school day for political advocacy.

For the above reasons, should students walk out on March 14th, they will be absent without permission, will miss instructional time and will be subject to normal disciplinary procedures. This consequence also applies to staff.

We are very concerned about the safety of all members of our school community and have instituted a wide variety of measures to ensure that our schools are safe and secure. We are committed to continue to do so.

For those of you who wish to communicate your views on school safety to our legislative representatives, their names and contact information is as follows:

Senator Rodney Whittemore, PO Box 96, Skowhegan, Maine, 04976

House of Representative Member Chad Grignon, 181 Fox Road, Athens Maine, 04912

Please feel free to call me or our District Principal, Mr. Samuel Harper, if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Virginia Rebar

Superintendent of Schools

MSAD#13/RSU83