

On The Alert!

Date: March 6, 2018
Attention: ASCIP Members
Affected Department(s): Risk Management, Admin, Teachers, & Staff
Applicability: K-12 Districts and Charter Schools

School Walkout Risk Management

Recent incidents involving school violence has reignited national interest in the measures taken to keep our children safe while attending school. Students are actively planning to display their concern regarding their own safety by organizing demonstrations and walkouts. As a result, public agencies face the challenge of balancing free speech learning opportunities with minimizing classroom disruptions.

Many times, walkout events are pre-planned for a specific day and time and include a march down a pre-determined route. As such, knowing in advance provides the opportunity to address the situation proactively. ASCIP recommends the following steps to safeguard students and staff:

1. Review existing board policy regarding student protests. If a policy exists, then the rules and regulations supporting this policy should be communicated to students and staff. If the policy does not allow walkouts, then communications should clearly state the repercussions to walking out (how unexcused absences are handled).
2. Schedule a meeting with stakeholders to discuss logistics should board policy allow for walkouts. When determining the stakeholders, consider including student leaders, staff, law enforcement, local officials, and parents.
3. Identify alternative forums for students to express their views, for example, a debate, or designating an area on campus where the students may protest versus leaving campus.
4. Determine potential protesting scenarios and develop a plan of action or protocol for each scenario and communicate it to all of the stakeholders. The plan should include the steps to safeguarding students and returning quickly back to regular operations.
5. Decide the public message to release and the methods of communicating the message, e.g. online. Attached is a sample communication to parents.
6. Meet and confer with law enforcement to ascertain their role.
7. Debrief after the protest and communicate expectations for future conduct. Response procedures should be documented in the district's school safety plan for future reference.

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) released a Student Protest Guidance Report which provides further details regarding the steps above along with different scenario examples to reference. The report can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Please contact your ASCIP risk services consultant at (562) 404-8029 to discuss further.

ATTACHMENT

Sample Letter to Parents Re: National School Walkout Day(s)

March 8, 2018

Dear Parent:

As we all face the challenge of addressing with our students and children the recent school violence incidents around the country, we wish to assure you that our staff's and students' safety is our highest priority and unwavering commitment.

National narrative regarding school safety has resulted in organized, student-led demonstrations throughout the country in the coming months. It is unknown at this time if any demonstrations are planned for our district; however, in the event demonstrations occur, we will endeavor to keep disruptions to class instruction minimal, in compliance with district policy. It is at this time that we also need to inform you that should students choose to exercise their freedom of expression in the form of a walk out that includes walking off campus, the school's legal obligation to protect the students' safety and welfare ends once students are off campus. Furthermore, should law enforcement respond to a demonstration or protest, please be advised that the district does not have any control or say over how law enforcement will handle the situation. The district will seek to work with law enforcement and share with officials all pertinent information regarding any proposed walkouts.

We are proud of all the students across America who want their voices to be heard. In this spirit, we seek to provide other alternative forms of expression to our students that includes keeping them safely on campus. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact (district representative information here). In the meantime, we will continue to keep the parents of the (district name here) community advised of any material developments that may affect our district.

Sincerely,

District Superintendent

Please contact your ASCIP's risk services consultant at (562) 404-5642 to discuss further.