

**March 14, 2018**

**Dear Parents and Guardians,**

Today's student participation in the national school walkout brought approximately **200 AHS students** to the visitors' bleachers behind our high school building. Police were present at our request for safety in such a high-profile event as were administrators and a few additional staff. The students were silent at first, but then gradually began to speak on different aspects of the issues involved. It would take too long to go through all comments here, but to paraphrase and summarize:

- One student read the names of the victims in the Parkland, Florida shooting
- Some students spoke about getting the violence in schools to stop- whatever it takes
- Some asked what the school is doing to keep them safe
- One student expressed displeasure at parents "not getting enough information" about recent events here

There was dialogue during the activity between students and Principal Rob Buchs, as well as with Superintendent Bob Goldschmidt, on such topics as:

- Using political pressure (and future voting) to produce the changes they desire
- Metal detectors in schools (many were in favor)
- Taking the protest of school violence to a more personal level- by looking at how we treat each other
- Asking what will happen on other "national protest days"
- The variety of opinions and passions on these topics
- Some expressed gratitude at the schools' work to keep them safe here
- Others questioned the true "security and safety" of our facilities

The students also heard from Mrs. Kelly Reising, our Assistant Principal for Student Personnel Services. She asked the students to consider finding 17 new people to meet and become friends with today. Things were handled differently, and in a more developmentally appropriate way, at **Mansion Avenue School**, where those few students who wanted to participate shared a closer conversation with Mrs. Smeltzer and school staff about this event and the meaning of and forms of protest.

Considering the deep feelings which these events have aroused around the country, we believe that the conversations and questions posed today can be part of our ongoing efforts to help students grow into concerned, discerning and responsible citizens.

- Bob Goldschmidt  
Interim Superintendent