



José Carrión • Superintendent of Schools  
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March 2018

Dear Wappingers CSD Learning Community,

The WCSD has had continued conversations, both formally and informally, related to the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Our secondary schools have continued to visit classrooms and speak with students. Below are some of the items that were addressed:

- Provide facts and only facts of the tragedy in Parkland Florida
- Review Procedures
- Discuss Drills and their importance
- Code of Conduct
- See/Hear Something, Say Something
- Question and Answer Opportunity for Students

From the Board of Education meeting to the Superintendent's Newsletter, to the classroom, including small group and individual student conversations, we have shared the importance of "see and/or hear something, say something." Also, throughout this time we want to focus on ensuring that students maintain good attendance. We want our students to continue to be active learners in their classrooms. Our District-Wide Safety Team consisting of parents, teachers, support staff, administrators, local police agencies and designated Board of Education members, held a meeting on March 6, 2018, to discuss a robust agenda of security and safety-related topics. The meeting minutes can be found on our [Board Committee Website](#) under District-Wide School Safety Committee.

In addition, our Senior Staff administration has had formal meetings with our secondary principals to discuss two specific dates which have been announced throughout our country as *National School Walkout*. These dates are March 14 and April 20, 2018. As part of these meetings, our secondary principals from Wappingers Junior and Van Wyck Junior High Schools, as well as John Jay Senior, Orchard View Alternative and Roy C. Ketcham High Schools, collectively wrote a letter that is posted on each of their individual school websites expressing their sentiments, as well as informing parents what they are doing proactively in light of this tragedy.

*The mission of the Wappingers Central School District is to empower all of our students with the competencies and confidence to challenge themselves, to pursue their passions and to realize their potential while growing as responsible members of their community.*

The student government in each of our schools has played a very important role by sharing their ideas for the March 14 events, activities, or announcements. Below is a chart which outlines what our schools will actively participate in:

<b>March 14, 2018</b>	
<b>SCHOOL(S)</b>	<b>SCHOOL SPONSORED</b>
Brinckerhoff, Evans, Fishkill, Fishkill Plains, Gayhead, Kinry, Myers, Oak Grove, Sheafe, Vassar	<p>During the morning announcements, the principal or designee will announce that today’s recital of their local school pledge is also in honor of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida and for all students everywhere in our country.</p> <p>A school-wide moment of silence will be conducted prior to the start of our instructional day; an announcement will be made explaining that this moment of silence is an opportunity for us to think about ways we can spread kindness and love around our school, community, and world.</p> <p>At Vassar, announcements are normally via website broadcast. However, on this day, Vassar will do a moment of silence (17 secs) over the PA system.</p>
Wappingers JHS	<p>During the morning announcements, there will be a moment of silence. At 10:00 a.m. students who wish to participate in the “Walk-In” will be permitted to go to the auditorium. Students will be permitted to give 1-minute speeches to show support and express their feelings. The emphasis will be on positive ways to affect change, support, and keep schools safe. The ceremony will conclude with a 1 minute and 17 second moment of silence. Students can wear the color orange to promote school safety.</p>
Van Wyck JHS	<p>There will be electric eternal candles in each classroom that will remain “lit” for the duration of the day.</p> <p>At 10:00 a.m. the entire school will participate in a 17-second moment of silence.</p> <p>Their Student Government encourages students and staff to add their ideas to a large banner outside the cafeteria, entitled “Suggestions for Making Schools Friendlier Places to Learn.”</p>
John Jay HS	<p>At 10:00 a.m. they will have 17 seconds of silence. After that, students who wish to participate in the Walkout will either go to the gymnasium or auditorium for 17 minutes. Admin, faculty and PPS staff will be on hand throughout the event. Many plan to wear orange. Students will also have available to them a “write in” area in the library for the week of March 12-16 where students can write letters regarding their concerns/questions, and all contact information/ mailing addresses of all representatives relevant to our area will be available for them. Student government will be overseeing this initiative. Letters will be reviewed by administration prior to mailing.</p>

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Orchard View AHS	During morning announcements, there will be 17 seconds of silence. During lunch periods, students will have the opportunity to write letters to elected officials regarding school safety. Teachers will be on hand to provide guidance. All letters will be reviewed by the principal prior to mailing.
Roy C. Ketcham HS	<p>All students will be encouraged to participate in 18 Random Acts of Kindness. 17 for the lives lost in Parkland and 1 in memory of all those lives lost in all other school violence tragedies.</p> <p>At 10:00 a.m. there will be a moment of silence for 18 seconds over the PA. Students who wish to participate in 18 minutes of silence will report to the gymnasium.</p> <p>Students who wish to write letters to local and state officials advocating for school safety will report to the auditorium for 18 minutes.</p> <p>All students will be encouraged to wear orange.</p>

You may be asking yourself why our secondary schools have elected to sponsor different events/activities. It is because the students had a voice and participated in discussions and made recommendations to the administration on how they would like to go about honoring those lost in Parkland Florida.

We encourage you to support our endeavors and speak to your children about being respectful and kind so that we can have a very productive day of learning on March 14, 2018.

Sincerely,

José L. Carrión  
Superintendent of Schools

Central Office Administration Principals of WCSD