



Dwight Township High School



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DTHS Parents & Students:

Dwight Township High School supports students' Constitutional rights to peaceful assembly and free expression. We are aware of the many student-led events that have been planned at many schools throughout the country for March 14th. Our goal at DTHS is to keep focus on teaching and learning while providing guidance and planning to support student and staff safety.

DTHS administration met with leaders of the Friends of Rachel Organization to develop plans for a meaningful event for that day--one that focuses on honoring the lives that were lost on February 14th at Stoneman Douglas HS in Parkland, Florida. Our planned activities focus heavily on maintaining the safety of our students and staff while providing time to express personal feelings towards the violence in schools.

At 10:00, all members of the DTHS family will move out of their classrooms and offices and proceed together as a unit to our cafeteria. There they will find 300 orange balloons that have been filled with helium. We chose orange because it is the color that has been designated to represent the #Neveragain movement. Displayed throughout the cafeteria will be biographies for each of the 17 victims of the Parkland, Florida school shooting. We will take time to read those biographies and silently reflect on how their family and friends must feel after the tragic loss of a loved one. Each student and staff member will be offered a notecard so they can express their feelings in a message that will be carried miles away from our school. The notecards will be tied to the balloons and displayed in our cafeteria for the remainder of our school day. State Representative Thomas Bennett will be present for the event as well. His presence will give our students the opportunity to make a connection with a true lawmaker in

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our state. Representative Bennett has also made plans to return to Dwight Township High School on a later date to speak with students in various history classes. During that time, he will discuss proper ways to write State Representatives to voice concerns and initiate change.

If all goes as planned, we will dismiss our students from classes at 2:00 that afternoon, 10 minutes before our normal dismissal time. We will then go back to the cafeteria to retrieve our balloons and assemble together as a unit with balloons in hand in the south parking lot. Together, we will send our messages to the sky in honor of the victims and their loved ones who are suffering as a result of their tragic loss.

We must maintain the safety of our students and staff at all times during the school day. As school leaders, we cannot put our students at risk of a potentially disastrous situation by sending them outside of our secured building on a date and time that has been broadcast to the nation. As stated earlier, we respect our students' Constitutional rights and want them to have the opportunity to express their thoughts in a meaningful way; we have just chosen a more appropriate and safer time to leave our building, that being 2:00 to release our balloons and messages. All school rules as written in the handbook will apply on this day as they are for any other day we are in session.

Sincerely,

Dan Kaiser, Principal

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