



## **Crisis Management & Walkout Information**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The news from Florida earlier this month is heartbreaking and saddening. We know that many parents, guardians, students, and community members are wondering how their school system is prepared to deal with crisis of this magnitude.

### *RPS Crisis Management*

Rochester Public Schools has a multi-tiered approach to crisis management. First, our school district has adopted a School Board Crisis Management Policy Number 806. The purpose of the policy is to provide a guide as to how to address a wide range of potential crisis situations within the district. Thorough crisis management should result in increased security for staff and students; minimization of damage and loss in the event of a crisis; and the return of the school/district to a normal functional level as soon as possible after crisis.

Annually, every building within our district revises and updates their crisis management plan. This plan is very in-depth and covers all of the topics listed within Policy 806. It is the expectation that our building administrators review the crisis management plan with their staff and all staff are expected to be familiar with this document.

Our staff and students practice drills annually with respect to the different crisis that may occur. Additionally, the district has an Executive Director of Operations. One of the responsibilities of this position is to oversee crisis training and prevention. The district also has a crisis team in place which provides support at the individual, building, and district level. We also recognize the importance of relationships with community partners and first responders. As a result, the district has participated in "table-top exercises" and planning meetings with Rochester Police Department, Olmsted County, Mayo Clinic, Olmsted Medical Center, Gold Cross, Federal Bureau of Investigation, SWAT, etc.

Safety and security of our students and staff is our number one priority at RPS. We continue to enhance our safety planning and preparedness through the use of research, trainings, and staff development.

### *Regarding Walkouts*

Several nation-wide online movements have sprung up, advocating for students and staff to stage walkouts during the school day on several different dates (March 14, March 24, and April 20) to advocate for political action on the issue of gun control. These events are not sponsored, organized, or endorsed by the district or any of its schools.

*What You Should Know:*

We are proud that our students want to exercise their First Amendment rights to express their views. When students advocate for an issue they feel passionate about, it can be a powerful learning experience.

We respect the fact that some of our students may desire to express their support for the walkout movements. We also recognize that some students may not want to participate in a walkout and would prefer to stay in class. We want to ensure that all students feel safe and respected, no matter what they choose to do. We are working with our student leadership groups to discuss ways that individual students can express their individual views without interrupting the educational environment at our schools.

If a walkout occurs, schools and classes will continue on their normal schedule, and we will deploy staff as necessary to ensure student safety on school grounds. We will not discipline students for participating in a walkout as long as the activity remains peaceful. However, the school district reserves the right to discipline any students who engage in violent or destructive behavior.

RPS encourages families to have conversations with their students about their expectations for participation in non-school sponsored activities, including walkouts. The best way for us to ensure student safety during the school day is to know where our students are—that's simply not possible if they leave school grounds. The school district is not responsible for supervising students who leave school grounds.

As always, the safety of our students and staff is our priority and appreciate our partnership with our parents/guardians in matters of safety and education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Munoz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Munoz, Superintendent