

# Office of the Superintendent

March 8, 2018



**Students First: Inspire,  
Educate, Celebrate**

*Glenn M. Maleyko, Ph.D.  
Superintendent*

Greetings,

On February 14<sup>th</sup> the breaking news reported another mass shooting, this time it was taking place at a high school in Florida. It's been almost a month since this tragic event occurred; students and staff have returned to the building but they will never be able to return to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School they once knew. The students, parents, and our fellow educators in Florida will have many emotional days ahead. We stand with them and support their efforts to heal as they struggle to find a new normal in their daily lives.

The horrific event in Florida once again began a national conversation about school safety, gun violence, and the steps we need to take as a society to address these issues. A loud voice in this national conversation has come from students. Part of that student voice is being heard through a series of planned student demonstrations. On March 14<sup>th</sup> students across the country, mostly at the high school level, are organizing a "school wide walk out" beginning at 10 a.m. and lasting for 17 minutes. The event is being organized on a national level by Women's March Youth Empower.

Anticipating that students in Dearborn will be taking part in this day of protest, administrators at each high school met with student leaders to discuss what they may be planning to do on March 14<sup>th</sup>. After talking with our students, it appears that all of our high schools will focus their assemblies on remembering and honoring the seventeen people who were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Just some of the planned activities include a moment of silence, gathering in a circle and placing seventeen flowers in the center, displaying posters/pictures of each victim and reading their names, reading statements of support for the students in Florida, and other related activities. The students have made it clear that they want their demonstration to be meaningful and any student who isn't willing to take this seriously should not take part. For those students who do not wish to take part, they will be able to remain in a supervised area of the school.

As a public school district we cannot, and will not, take part in organizing these student lead walk outs but we are legally and morally obligated to honor their first amendment rights. Our role as a District is not to support or deny students from participating, rather to ensure the safety

of students during their planned walk out. Our administrative team will be working with all of our high schools, supported by the Dearborn Police, to ensure that student safety is the priority. As part of our safety plan, we will be restricting access to school property to only students and school staff. Parents, community members, media, and others will not be allowed on school property during the 17 minute walk out.

Students will not be disciplined for taking part in the demonstrations as long as their actions remain peaceful and does not significantly disrupt the learning environment. Students at the middle and elementary level are not expected to be part of the walk out, but schools are prepared to address each situation on an individual basis.

In the Dearborn Public Schools we value the importance of hearing a variety of viewpoints, want the young people in our schools to be critical thinkers, seek out teachable moments beyond the classroom, and strive for our students to develop thoughtful opinions based on facts and knowledge not rumor and gossip. We are confident that our students will not take advantage of this student lead event and trust that they have the maturity to honor the spirit and meaning behind it. We encourage students and parents to have a conversation prior to March 14<sup>th</sup> regarding the value and reasons for participating in any type of protest or demonstration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn Maleyko". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Glenn Maleyko, Ph.D.  
Superintendent