

10 Things to Know About Walkouts Next Week

Students across the country are planning walkouts, forums, and other activities on March 14 to protest gun violence in our schools. Students in many of our AUSD schools also plan to engage in such activities. We hope the following guide helps you understand what will be happening at the school sites and how AUSD and our school sites will respond.

1. Students have certain First Amendment rights to free expression and speech on our campuses. While the events planned for March 14 are not affiliated with AUSD, we support these rights for all students, no matter their opinion on gun control.
2. A group of students representing high schools in Alameda is coordinating a centralized rally to take place after the site events on Wednesday. This rally will include speakers, voter registration, community art, letter writing, and calls to legislators. We are gathering information about this event now and will be working with Alameda Police Department, site administrators, teachers, staff, and student leaders to try to make these events as safe and constructive as possible.
3. Students at some **middle schools** will be holding walkouts on their own campuses. The idea is for this to be about 17 minutes long (to honor each of the 17 victims in the school shooting in Parkland, Florida last month).
4. If parents and teachers of **elementary students** want to engage in action that day, we are encouraging them to focus on themes of inclusivity, respect, and peace rather than gun violence or school shootings.
5. Students will not be disciplined for walking out that day. They will be disciplined if they break the law or school rules during this time (e.g., vandalizing property, bullying, or causing personal injury to others).
6. Students cannot be compelled to walk out or disciplined or marked down for choosing to stay in class.
7. Students will receive unexcused absences if they walk out. They will also be responsible for making up lost work.
8. We are encouraging teachers to view the walkouts through an educational lens, by teaching about civic engagement, the history of walkouts, and other relevant, age-appropriate topics.
9. On the day of the walkouts, teachers will be assigned to either supervise students walking out of class or supervise students who choose to stay in class. Staff from district office will also be at the sites to help supervise.

10. We are expecting media coverage of these events and developing plans to work with reporters while minimizing disruption to our campuses.

Please know our focus is on the learning and on the safety of our students. We hope you will discuss these issues at home with your children so we all can focus together on the reason students are leading collective action and organizing to speak up for peace and safety in these times.