



Superintendent: East Alton-Wood River High School students will participate in National Walk Day

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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WOOD RIVER - East Alton-Wood River students will participate in the National Walk Out at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 14.

The walkout has been planned and coordinated nationally by Women's March Youth Empower in response to the Florida shooting. On Feb. 14, 2018, at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., an alleged gunman Nikolas Cruz, 19, hid in closets and fired a semiautomatic AR-15 weapon into classrooms, killing 17.

East Alton-Wood River High School Superintendent Dr. John Pearson said the following:

“East Alton-Wood River High School, like many high schools in the area and around the nation, is being affected by students who may wish to express their feelings about the recent events in Parkland, Fla., and also the other senseless gun violence seen in too many of the schools in this nation. As many of you know, there are several grassroots efforts across the country to ask students to participate in peaceful walk-outs. One of those walkouts is scheduled by the organizers from 10-10:17 a.m. on Wednesday, March 14.

“East Alton-Wood River supports our students’ First Amendment rights to peacefully assemble and to offer their free expression, in accordance with school rules and with the goal of not disrupting the learning environment. Our goal in responding to these national walk-out plans and to any potential desire of East Alton-Wood River students to assemble peacefully is to try and keep focus on teaching and learning while providing guidance planning to support student and staff safety.”

Pearson said the EA-WR administration has established guidelines for the school to voluntarily participate in the nationally sponsored event on March 14.

“During this day, East Alton-Wood River will stay in its normal schedule, with the minor exception of “flipping” its advisory period to the beginning of third period, instead of at the end. In other words, our advisory period will run from 9:55 to 10:20 a.m. with third period beginning at 10:25 a.m. for its usual 50-minute duration.

Pearson said at this point students will have two choices:

Students may participate in their advisory period by attending their advisory meeting, as usual. They will remain with their respective advisory teacher and proceed to their third hour class at 10:20 a.m. to receive instruction. Teachers will remain in their classrooms and continue with their instruction as planned.

If students want to participate in the national walkout, they must have a written permission from a parent/guardian prior to walking out of the building. The permission form from the parent or guardian must be submitted to the EA-WR Attendance Center or Main Office no later than 8 a.m. on March 14, 2018.

Students will proceed to the Memorial Gym Parking Lot by the flagpole where we will have a quiet reflective time of 17 minutes, one minute for each of the 17 lives lost in Florida (10:00-10:17 a.m.)

This event will be allowed as long as it remains peaceful and non-disruptive. Students must remain on school property at all times. Administration, as well as local law enforcement, will be present to supervise. At 10:18 a.m., students will be required to return to their third-hour class by 10:25 a.m.

Pearson said in conclusion: “We sincerely believe it is important in a Democracy to give students a voice, to listen to their concerns, and give them a choice - provided that expression does not disrupt the educational environment. In providing them choice, we want students to have the right to remain in their classroom to participate in normal advisory activities or participate in this student led-walkout. We firmly believe that an important part of school is helping students learn to advocate for themselves, stand up for what they believe, and express their concerns through peaceful dialogue and reason.”

Anyone with any inquiries can contact Dr. Pearson at (618) 254-3151, extension 2502.