

Walking Out and Standing Up: East Alton-Wood River students take stand for victims of violence

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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WOOD RIVER - As many as 62 students gathered around the flagpole behind East Alton-Wood River High School Wednesday in a silent protest against gun violence in schools.

The students stood silently in a semi-circle in remembrance of those who died in the Parkland, Florida, massacre as well as other schools throughout the years. They were joined by East Alton Wood River High School Superintendent John Pearson, a 1971

graduate. The palpable silence lasted for several minutes as the students stood in solidarity among the sound of spring birds and traffic.

The East Alton Wood River High School students were taking part in a national walk out scheduled at schools across the United States designed to draw more attention to the victims of gun violence in America - especially young people going to school.

At 10 a.m., the scheduled walk-out began, and it lasted until 10:17 - one minute for every person killed in Florida.

"This was never a school sponsored event," he said. "We wanted to offer them the opportunity to do this in a safe and peaceful manner. Students were only missing this advisory period during these 17 minutes."

Students had to sign permission slips to take part. Pearson said he was proud of them after the event. He said they conducted themselves in a peaceful manner.

Pearson ended the period of quiet contemplation by directing students' attentions to the memorial bricks underneath the flag, adding those people memorialized in the bricks never had to worry about mass shootings.

