



ABINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL
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March 1, 2018

Dear Abington Middle School Families,

Over the past two weeks the tragedy in Parkland Florida has been at the forefront of our thoughts. Details about the incident, and the national response to it, continue to lead news media reports. You may be aware that many high school students around the country are planning to engage in some form of civic response that is intended to bring attention to school safety. It is anticipated that any action taken by high school students who wish to exercise their rights to advocate for school safety, peacefully assemble and promote civic learning will be limited to seventeen minutes in duration, representing the 17 lives lost in Parkland. I do not feel that it is appropriate for Abington Middle School to facilitate a similar action to be taken by middle school students.

As the Principal of Abington Middle School and the father of a seventh-grade daughter, I believe that we have a responsibility to help our adolescent students understand this from both a current events and historical standpoint. Without taking a political standpoint, I am asking Abington Middle School history and social studies teachers to discuss the history of non-violent civil disobedience, including a discussion of the current high school walk out movement with their classes prior to March 14, 2018. These discussions will be designed and implemented with our students' age and developmental readiness in mind; discussions held with eighth grade students will be more in depth than discussions held with fifth grade students. School administration will be visiting classrooms during these discussions.

Personally, I empathize with those high school students choosing to express their concerns on March 14, 2018 and am supportive of my son, a high school junior, participating at his school. Professionally, my responsibility is to assist our students in understanding the reasons for the current movement and the historical context of non-violent civil disobedience that has helped to shape our democracy. Therefore, Abington Middle School will approach this from an educational perspective and will not participate in the national school walk out on March 14, 2018. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. MacCurtain
Principal