



"Together We Learn"

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23
(CENTRAL OKANAGAN)

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June 3, 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Proposed Student Walkout – June 4, 2014

As you may have heard through the media, an online Facebook site has been used to encourage a provincial student walkout for tomorrow morning. While we respect the rights of students to express their views regarding the current labour situation, the proposed walkout raises a number of concerns, particularly with regard to student safety and the potential loss of even more instructional time.

At the outset, I want to clarify that any walkout by students is **not** sanctioned or approved by the School District or by individual schools. As a result, parents should be aware that:

- While School Districts are responsible for the safety of students on school property, student safety cannot be guaranteed for students participating in walkout activities even if those take place during school hours.
- As the walkout is being promoted online, without an identified group of organizers, we do not know if there are plans at individual schools for students to leave the building. We caution parents that, if their son or daughter is planning to participate, this will be happening without supervision by school or district staff.
- Tomorrow is the same block rotation at all of our secondary schools and many of our middle and elementary schools that has already been missed twice due to the rotating strikes. For students to miss these same classes again tomorrow will lead to an unnecessary disruption to their learning during an already difficult time.

I would also like to emphasize that we have already seen examples of students organizing very thoughtful and meaningful approaches to expressing their opinions about the current labour dispute. Yesterday, for example, a group of students organized a rally at a local high school and expressed their opinions to the media. At another school, two students were interviewed about their concerns and this resulted in television coverage that effectively communicated the 'student voice'. We also know of groups of students who are planning their own activities during non-instructional time to communicate their message. These are all examples of students being leaders and taking appropriate steps to share their concerns.

In the event that you have a son or daughter who is planning to participate in tomorrow's proposed walkout, it would be appreciated if you would discuss this issue with your child(ren) and encourage them to make good choices about their own education.

Sincerely,

Hugh Gloster
Superintendent of Schools