

Student Views

Do you feel safe at school?



Nick Falter, Senior

"I do feel safe at school because all of our staff know what they're doing and we have a lot of security around our schools."



Will Thornton, Junior

"The student liaison makes me feel safe, but if there's a shooter in the new building, I think I would get killed."



Margot Fiegen, Junior

"I feel safe amongst the student body, but I do worry because there are so many students at New Trier."



Graham Rhodes, Senior

"I feel 100 percent safe with security guards stationed pretty much everywhere and teachers stationed during free periods."



Carol Klingler, Sophomore

"I feel safe overall, but I feel like there aren't proper regulations in the parts of the new building that are covered in glass."

Staff Editorial

Walk out on Wednesday

Next Wednesday, Mar. 14, students plan to walk out of their regularly scheduled classes for 17 minutes at 10 A.M., to honor the 17 people who died in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting. We encourage all students to join this demonstration, and to lend their voices to the collective cry for serious school safety reform.

This newspaper has previously reported on the myriad of existing safety issues—especially in the new building. Therefore, to all the students who may be on the fence about the walkout, we say: Be loud. Be disruptive. March for our lives.

And it is most imperative for this to function as a legitimate and meaningful message to policymakers in Winnetka, Springfield, and Washington, that students are disruptive. The school should not create a special schedule to "accommodate" the walkout.

While it is reassuring that the school supports its students right to protest, especially in contrast to schools across the country threatening protesters with suspension or expulsion, it's important that the school preserves the spirit of protest and not interfere. For the message to be as strong as it can be, it must be a genuine act of civil disobedience.

For most students, this will be their first exposure to protest; in stark contrast to the weekend-specific Womens' March, students will be directly violating Illinois School Code, article 26, mandating school attendance for those ages 6-17, to call for change.

In an open letter to educators statewide, the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois stated "This is a rare moment—when a fundamental lesson in civics can move beyond the classroom and come to life."

It is in this spirit that students should have the opportunity to speak their minds and walkout of their classes, not a special 17 minute advisory period, on Mar. 14.

Students are passionate about this issue, feeling the continuous squeeze of uncertainty about safety not just from Newtown or Parkland, but more locally with the pair of recent bomb threats against Niles North High School this year. Most are prepared to face truancies, as well as the chance that they'll miss an important part of that day's lesson. With the school announcing that it has chosen not to hand down truancies for the 17 minutes of the protest—and we assume a logistically required grace period of ten or so minutes—and almost every major university not holding resulting disciplinary actions against applicants, this walkout has already been made very accessible for students.

While this certainly isn't the first time students have banded together to call for these reforms (black youth in particular have long had their ongoing organizing efforts go unrecognized) the sheer mass of student activism nationwide is noteworthy.

New Trier students should be aware of the privilege they wield as a predominantly white, wealthy, and politically influential district, and utilize the agenda-setting ability that carries.

To achieve lasting change, it's important to remember that this walkout is the start, not the end. Parkland students don't own this movement, even if they sparked it. Ownership instead lies with each and every student passionate enough to accept a truancy or worse for what they believe. Beyond this date, it is important that students register to vote, talk with legislators, and continue to advocate for their interests at every level of government.

For many this will be their first experience of civil disobedience, but it doesn't need to be their last. Parents and the school should stand back and let students own the movement for their own safety.

This piece represents the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of The New Trier News. The views expressed in this piece do not necessarily reflect the views of all staff members or Editorial Board members of New Trier News.

Don't let the walkout lose its meaning

by Emily Abt

On Wednesday, Mar. 14, the 17 minute ENOUGH National School Walkout, organized by Women's March Youth EMPOWER will be taking place at many schools throughout the nation.

ENOUGH has expressed that this walkout may take many different forms such as students congregating in hallways to hold hands, singing songs, standing together in silence, or speaking the names of people killed by gun violence.

New Trier has decided to participate in the 17-minute walkout. Various clubs and student groups have taken the initiative in organizing a student-wide ceremony to remember the 17 victims who lost their lives on Feb. 14.

The school has done their part in organizing the walkout; however, as we saw with seminar day, there are limitations as to how politically involved New Trier can get. The school administration, along with teachers, cannot be included in a political event, since government employees cannot participate in political rallies during business hours.

Student Alliance has labeled the goal of the walkout as a way to bring students together, drawing in legislators and allowing them to express their voice, regardless of whether their political view supports or opposes increasing gun control.

The second part of this mission troubles me, for the official, public commission on the ENOUGH National School Walkout website states, "We raise our voices for action against all these forms of gun violence."

Because the walkout is not obligatory and student-led, I believe that New Trier should be able to parallel the goal of the walkout with

that of the intended purpose, despite the political stance it takes.

Many students agree with this perspective: "Now that the school has gotten involved, the true meaning of the walkout, going from the message from the creators of it, is lost. Because the school cannot get behind a political protest or stance, they are making it as open-ended as possible. Not only is this not what the national walkout is for, but it leaves room for students to protest for guns," stated junior Kam Gottlieb.

Senior Eden Hirschfield partnered with New Trier's Amnesty International Club to raise money for EveryTown For Gun Safety, a movement of Americans fighting for common-sense reforms to reduce gun violence. Hirschfield designed orange T-shirts reading "Protect kids not guns," that will sell the two days leading up to the walkout.

Hirschfield is using this walkout as an opportunity to advocate for "policy and change" instead of "thoughts and prayers." This bold statement encompasses the meaning of Mar. 14, showing real, unrelenting courage of students exercising their right to freedom of speech.

On Feb. 27, Student Alliance organized a forum, advertising it as an opportunity for students to learn more about the event and provide input. Many students attended the forum; however, the pledged goal was not carried out.

Although the presentation was well articulated; it lacked the true meaning of a forum, for students in attendance were unable to express their feelings or ask questions.

"I don't think it should have been called a 'forum.' We were pretty much limited to putting these comment and concerns in a box," Gottlieb stated. "Don't get me wrong it was very informative, and our

president was very clear in their message, but things related to the events on Mar. 14 are losing their meanings because of the school. I just believe they are responding too much."

Although I believe that the parameters set by the school are too restrictive, I am extremely impressed by the political debate that this movement has brought to this school.

Regardless of the controversy, the simple fact that students are engaging in an intellectually challenging debate is incredible.

As a former debate student, I've had experience researching current events of which I do not feel personally connected, and even still, I inevitably become passionate in my opinion.

Because New Trier students feel an emotional connection with this event, as Parkland High School has similar traits to those of New Trier, students have become truly passionate about their beliefs on gun control, which seemed only a month ago, an irrelevant matter to this area.

Mar. 14 will be a monumental day for every student in the nation. Despite the relevancy that issues facing gun violence have become, calls for change are continuously ignored by policymakers and legislators.

Whether you believe the school is not being supportive enough of encouraging students to voice opinions, or that the school is being too supportive of a political belief, 17 lives were lost on Feb. 14 and that matter cannot be debated.

The kids are not alright

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by Rebecca Lee

"Old people shouldn't be calling the shots on what we're going to have to deal with. If young people want change for their generation, then young people have to come out and elect people. I hope that this generation will exercise the right to vote."

Ultimately, this is a pivotal

moment for young people who seek change in the current state of affairs. In order for them to attain this change, however, they must continue to research and speak up and volunteer and protest. They must continue to care.

"Young people have a duty as citizens of the United States to have an opinion. We are the people," said Lariviere.

Brett Rubin, Young Democrats faculty sponsor, emphasized that all young people, no matter where they stand or what they believe in, must be socially aware and politically active. "This is your country," said Rubin.

"Our current system is broken," said Hirschfield. "Our generation has an opportunity to change that. We're up next. We can't blow it."