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## **Superintendent on Darien High Walkout: It Was Orderly, Respectful**

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When Darien High School students participated in a walkout on Wednesday to commemorate the Parkland, Fla. school shooting, the event was orderly and people were respectful, school district Superintendent Dan Brenner told the Board of Education that night.

"No surprises that March 14 brought the walkout at the high school," Brenner said at the board's meeting. "I'm very pleased to report that I think it was an honorable day for our students who walked out, who listened to their student colleagues speak [...]"

The students gathered outside during the walkout.

He said the walkout lasted for 17 minutes, although [a report in Darien News](#) said that the 700 or so students who walked out took a bit longer. Students gathered in the high school courtyard, where they heard brief

biographies of the 17 people who died in the massacre.

The event was meant to allow for people with a range of opinions about gun control to participate, a student organizer told the newspaper. News reporters, parents and the public were barred from the campus during the event.

The students "filed back in in a very respectful way, without incident," Brenner continued. "I want to thank the Police Department for their presence both at the middle school and the high school campuses. I think [that] gave everybody assurances that their campuses were safe as we went through this process. They were true partners on this day."

Brenner had announced on Feb. 28 that he was meeting with police officials before March 14 to get help in keeping school campuses orderly on that day. He said then that high school students would not be disciplined for walking out of class at 10 a.m. on March 14.

Here's an excerpt from Brenner's Feb. 28 announcement about district plans for the day of the walkout:

Students who choose to participate in the walkout will not be penalized for the time out of class, with the expectation they will return to their classes at the conclusion of the 17 minutes.

In order to ensure this is a safe moment for all involved, we will be limiting access to DHS with the exception of students and school personnel during the walkout. We ask that parents not come to DHS on March 14th between 10:00am and 10:17am. Stated simply, our campus cannot accommodate parents attending this event. Please support us and the students by adhering to this request.

At MMS, we do not feel it is developmentally appropriate for our students to participate in a walkout. Instead, on March 14th, we will take the opportunity to utilize an extended Flex period to have a thoughtful age appropriate discussion with the children about the role they can play toward making our schools emotionally and physically safe.

At our elementary schools, we will continue to support our students in a safe learning environment. On March 14th, our faculty and staff will emphasize and remind children of ways to be kind, empathetic, and care for one another in and out of school.

On Wednesday night, Brenner also praised the student organizers of the event. "The kids that organized [this] should feel very good about their activities because they did it, again, in the most respectful way," he said.