

November 16, 2016

Re: Thursday's Student Walk-Out

Dear Silver Oak Families,

Since its founding Silver Oak High School has viewed "leaving campus without permission" as a serious safety issue and physical liability. We hold student safety as the most important of aspect of our duty as educators. To that end "leaving campus without permission" has been viewed as an infraction that...

48900. (k) (1) Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

Consequently, according to the Family Handbook, "leaving campus without permission" has been seen as warranting suspension. Therefore, the students who walked out last Thursday were suspended based upon the school's standing practice.

When it became evident to me that other Hayward high schools had students and teachers participating in the protest, I reached out to HUSD and the other charter high schools in Hayward to ask how they approached their student "walk-out". By Monday afternoon I had learned the following:

- Other Hayward high schools do not view "leaving campus without permission" as a suspendible offense.
- Those schools marked their students, who left campus without permission on Thursday, as "unexcused absences" or truanancies.
- Though many of the schools did not view the march as a "school sanctioned" event, they knew of the march the day before, were able get parental permissions from those students who wanted to attend and were able to arrange substitutes for their teachers who wanted to attend.

Once I compiled the above information I realized that I needed to follow the lead of the other Hayward schools in this instance. I did not want our students penalized for an infraction that other students were not. I, therefore, reversed the suspension for all those students who "walked out" on Thursday. The students were marked as having an "unexcused absence" for the afternoon. Families were phoned Monday evening to inform them that their students were welcome to return to school on Tuesday and that, as the suspension was reversed, the students would be allowed to make-up any work missed on Monday.

I apologize for the confusion and/or frustration this process has caused any member of our Silver Oak community. Please know that our intent throughout was simply to insure the physical safety of our students, nothing more...nothing less.

Moving forward we are reviewing the practice of suspending students who leave campus without permission. We are also instituting a Student Action Committee. The committee will; plan safe and organized responses to the election and any policies or laws that may come as a result of the new

government. The committee will also look at the needs of both the local community of Hayward and the State of California. In this way the committee can lead all the Silver Oak students to become agents for change locally and nationally. Today, Wednesday, the Student Action Committee will have its first weekly meeting.

We have much work to do here at Silver Oak and in our Nation. We will need all the members of our community to help us in peacefully forging our future together.

Thank you,

Elaine Blasi  
Head of School