



Message Guidance & Position Statement: School Shootings, Safety, and “Never Again” Movement

Full Position Statement- Kansas NEA has long stood for safe, gun-free schools. Tragic events where the lives of students and teachers are being taken as a result of gun violence are unacceptable. Sadly, our elected leaders have made a clear choice to ignore the reality our students and education professionals face. As students have witnessed yet another incident of murder on a school campus at the hands of a gunman, they’ve organized a movement to bring the issue into sharp focus calling for leaders to enact laws to protect them against further gun violence.

As a union of professional educators, Kansas NEA encourages all students to become engaged in civic activities and to participate fully in a free democratic society. We fully support the students of Kansas who choose to express their concerns by participating in peaceful demonstrations such as those currently being organized in response to the devastating tragedy in Parkland, Florida. We call on all school districts to ensure that this kind of organized student activity is permitted, respected, and treated as an exercise in civic responsibility. This is- in the most genuine sense- **a teachable moment.**

Kansas NEA also recognizes that professional educators have a duty to the students in our schools. To that end, **we recommend for our members to fulfill their duties to monitor and facilitate student learning during these events. We call on all elected School Boards to stand in solidarity with educators and students on this issue** and to recognize that students are no longer willing to be the victims of violence. Teachers should not have to consider shielding students from bullets to be part of a new normal. Parents shouldn’t have to confront the idea of sending their child to school with a kevlar backpack to keep them safe.

We are obligated to remind all educators that failure to comply with contractually obligated duties could result in adverse job action being taken against employees. We must also remember that students who choose not to participate in the events require supervision in our classrooms. **We look for school administrators to support all students and all educators about their choice to participate or not to participate in these events.**

We must all recognize that from Columbine to Sandy Hook to Parkland and from too many other schools across the nation, we conclude that enough is enough and that the time for inaction is over.

Throughout America, students are leading on an issue where the adults have failed. We must empower them and honor their commitment to civic engagement on a critical issue.



Educators throughout our nation dedicate their lives to student success in a free democratic society. No educator or student should have to sacrifice their lives while attending schools to teach or learn the lessons that will lead them on their path to success.

Messaging Guidance:

1. The full position statement has been distributed to all staff, UniServs and local affiliates. Locals are encouraged to use and distribute the position statement to coordinate messaging with their members, districts and the public along the various messaging channels each local uses.
2. Each local association should work directly with school administration regarding potential student advocacy events and determine the role of school staff relative to supervision and support of all students during these events.
3. Each local association is encouraged to provide to their UniServ Director for review and recommendations, details of directives issued to school staff on this issue.
4. If local associations require communications support to promote (along KNEA social media channels) these events as “teachable moments,” please contact kneanews@knea.org or call KNEA HQ to coordinate further.
5. If you require additional assistance from KNEA Communications regarding media inquiries or activities on the day of the planned student-led events, please contact marcus.baltzell@knea.org or call KNEA HQ.