

# Newark Public Schools

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
A. Robert Gregory • Interim Superintendent



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Interim Superintendent

February 22, 2018

Dear NPS Family and Community Members,

On Tuesday, Governor Murphy issued an executive order for the flags of the United States and the State of New Jersey to be flown at half-staff to recognize and mourn the passing of the victims in Parkland, Florida.

I join with him and all of those affected by this senseless tragedy, as well as millions of people across this country, in mourning and remembering the lives of those lost.

As Parkland students and families begin an important dialogue, and we look for answers as a nation, we are doing everything we can here at the Newark Public Schools to make sure that our students and staff members are safe in our schools. I know tragedies like these feel even closer to home for those of us who have spent our lives working with and have children in schools. I also know that at times these events can feel like they are a world away for some of us. In each case, it is essential that we do everything that we can locally to prevent against potential harm in the future.

Toward that end, I am meeting directly with the Mayor and his Director of Public Safety this week to identify areas of further partnership. Please also know that our security team is reviewing our District Crisis Plan and Emergency Response Plan. Our schools are required by the New Jersey Department of Education to practice safety drills every month, inclusive of fire drills. We will continue to work with the police to have the most effective Emergency Response Plan possible and continue to annually update district security equipment and practices.

We also realize that students may have questions or fears about this event. We would encourage you to reach out to your school counselor or principal for strategies to support them by using this as an opportunity for learning and growth where at all possible. I also know that city leaders and interfaith groups are getting together to talk about this tragedy and mourn those lost together.

Most importantly, I once again want to share my sincere sadness and condolences with the families of Parkland, Florida. No community should have to endure an event like this. Let us keep them in our prayers and do everything we can to come together here in Newark and as a country to create a safer future for all of America's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Robert Gregory".

A. Robert Gregory  
Interim Superintendent  
Newark Public Schools