

Chippewa Valley educators will use walkout as a 'teachable moment'



Chippewa Valley Schools Superintendent Ron Roberts said administrators are meeting with student leadership regarding potential student participation locally in the March 14 national school walkout. Photo courtesy of CHIPPEWA VALLEY SCHOOLS

By Nicole Tuttle , For The Macomb Daily

Posted: 03/12/18, 10:31 AM EDT | Updated: 2 days ago



During a recent Board of Education meeting at the district's administration building in Clinton Township, Dakota Ninth Grade Center student Mohamed Smidi discussed a potential student demonstration to bring awareness to school safety. Nicole Tuttle — For The Macomb Daily

When students in Chippewa Valley Schools take part in the national school walkout Wednesday, they hope to send a message to Congress on school violence.

Dakota Ninth Grade Center student Mohamed Smidi recently came before the Board of Education to discuss the student demonstration to bring awareness about school safety.

“He spoke to the board because he supports the idea of some sort of student voice regarding national issues right now on safety, student safety,” Superintendent Ron Roberts said. “So right now what we are doing is principals are meeting and talking with student leadership.”

Administrators and students at both Dakota High School in Macomb Township and Chippewa Valley High School in Clinton Township have been meeting to discuss ways of participating in the March 14 national walkout.

Roberts is looking for Wednesday's event to be "a teachable moment," adding the job of administrators is to make sure that things are done in a safe manner for students.

"It needs to be something that is managed and planned in such a way that it would stick to the purpose of the activity," Roberts said. "We want to make sure if students participate they participate for the prescribed time and return to class."

The events will take place on school campuses, according to Roberts.

Dakota High School has approximately 3,000 students and Chippewa Valley High School about 2,500.

Macomb County Sheriff Anthony Wickersham said more than 30 school-related threats have been reported to his office since Feb. 14, the day a student went on a shooting rampage at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida that killed 17 people.

Teens who directed threats toward Chippewa Valley, Eisenhower and Utica high schools have been charged as adults and could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

Threats are taken seriously, but sometimes students fail to understand the impact of words, and parents need to help students to understand the impact, according to Roberts.

Some security measures in Chippewa Valley Schools include locking exterior doors during the school day, using cameras to monitor entrances, installing buzzer systems, increasing teacher preparedness for emergencies, implementing safety plans that are required by the state each year, and adding additional high school security, according to Roberts.

"At this point in time we are reassessing and seeing if we are doing everything we reasonably can do," Roberts said.