

Email from Hays CISD Superintendent Dr. Eric Wright
Sent: February 3, 2026

Important Information for Hays CISD Regarding Student Protests

Dear Hays CISD Family,

As you know, yesterday, hundreds of our students at multiple Hays CISD campuses joined students from other school districts in our region and across the state by participating in student walkouts. The district did not organize, assist, nor condone this activity. Our statement about that is online at: www.haysisd.net/statement. That was yesterday.

Today, and moving forward, as a school district community, we must return our focus to learning, instruction, and the business of being at school. Remaining in class is the best place for students to become educated so that they may affect the policy changes that they believe are in the best interest of society. I understand that emotions are running high among students, parents, and community members; so, I am appealing to everyone to help us rise to the best of what our school district has always been.

Future Walkouts Cannot Happen

We are hearing reports of continued, potential walkouts at additional schools later this week. This cannot happen. These walkouts are a strain on the resources of the school district and community law enforcement agencies – neither of which has any control over what happens with national immigration policy. Future walkouts would not be productive and only hurt our students' self-interests. At a certain point, the original protest messages get lost in what begins to appear as one-upmanship about which campus can out protest the other. Further, many also lose the messages in what may start to appear to be kids simply looking for excuses to skip school.

Student Safety and Behavior Concerns

Additionally, a relatively few number of students placed themselves in positions of danger and made horrible choices as part of the protests yesterday. Their behavior has overshadowed any messages that the other protesting students might have tried to convey. Continued attempts to walk out of school will do no service to the causes for which our students say they wish to advance. Rather, continued disruptions would likely only further the negative sentiment that is developing about our students and school district because of the videos that are going viral nationally.

Additional Rules

Students do have the First Amendment right to participate in protests, but they are not free from consequences. Starting immediately, in the interest of what is best for kids, I am directing the following for any future truancies regardless of reason:

1. Respecting parent choice: If parents wish to allow their children to participate in a protest activity, they will need to come to campuses in person to sign their children out of school and then leave school property.

2. Students who have not been signed out of school by their parents will continue to receive unexcused absences and will also be counted truant. We are reinstating Saturday detention school for truant students, and they will lose their exemption status for final exams.
3. Student discipline related to leaving class or school without permission will be stacked, meaning each refusal of a teacher or campus administrator's directive to return to class will count as a separate violation of the student code of conduct and a separate offense.

Incidents from Monday, February 2, 2026

There are several items from Monday I need to address:

1. There is a video circulating of students being arrested by the Kyle Police Department. These two minor students were arrested off campus in connection with possessing alcohol and not cooperating with law enforcement. The Kyle Police Department is investigating this case and has issued a statement on the matter.
2. There is a video circulating of students believed to be from Johnson High School in an off-campus fight with an adult male. The adult male is not a Hays CISD teacher or employee, though he has been incorrectly attributed as being so. The Buda Police Department is investigating this case and has issued a statement on this matter.
3. There is a photo of a teacher displaying protest signs while on a campus. These signs also included profanity. Upon discovery of the photo, the teacher was immediately placed on administrative leave, and he will not be returning to work in Hays CISD. As we explained in our statement yesterday, the school district belongs to everyone and we do not, as an entity or as employees, use taxpayer time and resources to engage in political activity.

Final Thoughts

In my career as an educator and school leader, I have always counted on the simple adage of focusing on what is in our power to control. There are many things that are not. We cannot control the rhetoric from people and politicians on both sides of the aisle and at all levels of government who are engaging in commentary and opinion. However, we, as a community, can control our actions – what we do next regarding these student walkouts. I am not discounting the genuine emotion, anger, fear, frustration, anxiety, and division that exists. It pains my heart to see our community so torn. But, I do know this – people look to Hays CISD as an example. We pride ourselves on navigating treacherous waters with grace and humility – and smart responses to challenges. While immigration policy is not in our control, it is in our power to resist division and strife. Let's show everyone, by working together, that we can rise to this occasion and direct our energy appropriately.

Sincerely,
Eric