

Guide to Addressing Student Walkout Issues

Presented by:

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and

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at the

**38th Annual Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) Conference Workshop
Communications Task Force: From Civil Disobedience to Civic Education**

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Guidelines for Student Unrest

- 1. All principals are to report to their respective campuses no later than 7:30 a.m.**
- 2. Safety and Security Area Advisors will monitor each secondary campus. They will contact Safety and Security by 9:00 with an update on each campus.**
- 3. Principals are to ensure that all students report to classes immediately and that halls remain free of students during class time.**
- 4. All teachers will deliver a comprehensive, engaging instructional program, with the opportunity to use the last 15 minutes of first period for students to engage in dialogue about the current events and/or write letters to members of the U.S. Congress to express their opinions and beliefs.**
- 5. Social Studies Department personnel have compiled contact numbers/addresses for U.S. Congress members for distribution.**
- 6. Principals are to ensure that students remain on campus for the full day; the only exception will be for those students who are checked out by their parents.**
- 7. Teachers should notify school administrators immediately of low attendance in any class. Administrators will call or e-mail Safety and Security if there is a patter of low attendance.**
- 8. The primary goal of the campus is to provide a day of quality instruction for students and to ensure the safety and security of all students and staff.**

Fort Worth Independent School District
School Leadership and Student Support Services

Progressive Discipline for Students
Participating in Student Walkouts

Level I
(First walkout)

Unexcused absence
(Follow Truancy Policy & Procedures)**
Make-up school work

Level II
(Second walkout)

Unexcused absence
(Follow Truancy Policy & Procedures)**
Parent contact
Make-up work
Assigned to Saturday detention for 3
hours

Level III
(Third walkout)

Unexcused absence
(Follow Truancy Policy & Procedures)**
Parent conference
Make-up work
Assigned to Saturday detention for a
total of 6 hours
Loss of off-campus lunch privileges

Failure to report to Saturday detention will result in assignment of lunch detention for 5 days per occurrence. Failure to attend lunch detention will result in further disciplinary action.

****Truancy Policy states:**

If a student misses 3 or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the student is truant. This student can and will be prosecuted for Failure to Attend School (Texas Education Code 25.094) in the School Attendance Court.

The Fort Worth Independent School District reserves the right to administer additional disciplinary action based on the severity of the violation of the Student Code of Conduct.



Activities to Address Student Walkouts

1. Utilize the situation as a “teachable moment,” the Program Director for social studies drafted curriculum for social studies teachers to use in the classroom.
2. Superintendent attended a joint meeting of Tarrant County Superintendent’s to discuss student unrest issues and disciplinary action.
3. Superintendent sends letter to all parents and guardians addressing her concerns about the student unrest and walkouts.
4. Utilizing the NEORIS calling system, the superintendent placed calls to parents and guardians in English and Spanish encouraging their support for students to stay in school and addressed disciplinary action for student unrest.
5. Superintendent holds daily staff debriefings.
6. Hold a special principal’s meeting for middle and high school principals to discuss district response and actions to the student walkouts and future student unrest issues.
7. Superintendent and her staff met with Hispanic community leaders, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and respective Board members on student unrest issues.
8. Collaboration between Fort Worth ISD, City of Fort Worth, Community Organizations and Police Department to coordinate and reschedule the “*Day Without Immigrant’s Walkout*” for Sunday, April 30th instead of Monday, May 1st a school day.
9. Be proactive in our stance; maintain constant communication with Chief of Police; City and Community Leaders.
10. Superintendent sent letters to staff thanking them for their loyalty and dedication to the students in this community.



100 N. UNIVERSITY DR. / FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76107-1360

MELODY A JOHNSON, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

March 29, 2006

Dear Parents:

As you probably know by now, a large group of Fort Worth ISD students from several high schools left their respective campuses yesterday to join a protest of immigration legislation.

I have two concerns about what happened.

There is the issue of your child's safety. Students don't realize they are putting themselves at risk of being injured by walking in large groups along busy thoroughfare. The Fort Worth Police Department and FWISD administrators and principals worked together to monitor the children as well as they could, but as you no doubt appreciate, this was a very dangerous situation.

Secondly, while we certainly recognize the right of all to protest, this cannot happen at the cost of losing valuable classroom instruction time. All who participated in yesterday's walkout will be expected to make up their academic work. All will receive an unexcused absence for the day.

We are instituting instruction during school hours that will help all students understand more about the issue they are protesting. We are also sharing information about more effective ways in which they can make their voices heard.

We heard and saw evidence that much of this protest was organized through the use of the text messaging. We are reminding all students today that having a cell phone at schools is a privilege and not a right. Anyone who uses a cell phone during class will be subject to our usual policy of having that item confiscated.

Again, while we acknowledge students' rights to protest, it cannot interfere with the rights of others nor compromise their personal safety or education. Should our students choose to continue to disregard school rules, city and state laws; we will be compelled to take successively more aggressive levels of disciplinary action.

I am appealing to you as parents and guardians to please make these points very clear to our children. You can help make sure they know the consequences of their actions and encourage them to channel their protests in more positive and productive ways so that their voices will be heard. I am very appreciative of your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melody Johnson".

Melody Johnson
Superintendent

/bg

Printed by: Friday, March 31, 2006 1:30:38 PM
Title: Student Walkouts : FWSIDFC Page 1 of 1

Tuesday, March 28, 2006 11:21:03 AM

Urgent Message

From:

Subject: Student Walkouts

To: High School Principals
Middle School Principals
Alternative High SH
Alternative Middle SH

Cc:

URGENT: March 28, 2006

To the Principal Addressed:

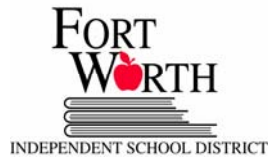
Please be advised that several schools are experiencing groups of students participating in social protest by walking out of school. If this occurs at your campus, please make sure that the students understand that any absence will be an unexcused absence and all work will need to be made-up. Student safety is our outmost concern. Do not interfere with their actions, but encourage them to return to class. Keep us informed of pertinent actions at your campus. Remember we are here to support you.

We recommend that the students use other means to express their concerns. The campus should let students know that teachers will help them send letters to their congressman or assist other peaceful avenues of protests.

The program director for social studies is putting together a lesson for tomorrow (Wednesday, March 29) which is to be used in social studies classes.

Please make sure that our students' safety comes first and they understand the peaceful ways by which their voices can be heard.

Assistant Superintendent
Secondary School Leadership



Lesson 1

Teaching about Controversial Issues in the Classroom

Conflict and controversy are part of our nation’s history. Freedom of speech and assembly are guaranteed to us under the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the United States Constitution. When a controversial issue arises, teachers have the opportunity to construct discussion techniques, which create an atmosphere of positive interaction. These techniques help students become involved in current events creating interest in issues, which are important to them and their families.

Use the following classroom strategies to help students discuss the current immigration and legislation issues.

Constructive Discussion Techniques

1. Paraphrasing I

Arrange students in pairs. Student A speaks for one minute stating his/her position on the issue. Student B listens without interrupting. Student B paraphrases what he/she heard for 30 seconds. Then, student B states his/her position on the same issue. Student A listens without interrupting and paraphrases student B’s response.

Paraphrasing II

After the first discussion, give each student in the pair a card either with “for” or “against” the issue. Repeat the procedure above. Switch sides. This activity allows every student to examine both sides of an issue.

2. Line-ups

Line-ups allow students to consider an issue and place themselves along a human continuum with their class. First, have students line up along the perimeter of the class according to birth date. Next, change the topic to hot/cold weather preferences. The purpose is to have students become familiar with the process and notice that they are not always standing by the same student. Now, ask students to place themselves along the continuum according to their support/belief of a controversial issue. Split the line in half to form pairs and follow the paraphrasing procedure above.

3. Structured Controversy

This activity takes more class time; however, it allows students to research the issue and make arguments based on actual text, not just on their opinions. The procedure, based on a cooperative model, (see Johnson & Holubec, 1992, and Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2000), is as follows:

- a. The teacher provides a controversial subject (e.g., immigration legislation).

- b. Students are paired off as teams to research the background of the topic and prepare their case for or against the legislation or proposal.
 - c. Now, the opposing teams present their arguments to each other and attempt to refute the other side's arguments.
 - d. Teams **reverse their roles** and present the position they had argued against.
 - e. Each team writes a compromise report that synthesizes the arguments of both sides.
4. Write a letter to your senator, representative, or local newspaper stating your concerns.

Students in Fort Worth may write to:

Representative Kay Granger, 12 th District Washington DC Office 440 Cannon HOB Washington, DC 20515 Ph. 202-225-5071 Fax 202-225-5683 email: http://kaygranger.house.gov/contact.asp	Representative Kay Granger, 12 th District Fort Worth Office 1701 River Run Road, Suite 407 Fort Worth, TX 76107 Ph. 817-338-0909 Fax 817-335-5852
Senator John Cornyn Washington DC 517 Hart Senate Office Bldg. Washington, DC 20510 Tel: 202-224-2934 Fax: 202-228-2856	Senator John Cornyn North Texas/Dallas Occidental Tower 5005 LBJ Freeway, Suite 1150 Dallas, Texas 75244 Tel: 972-239-1310 Fax: 972-239-2110
Kay Bailey Hutchison Washington DC 284 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510-4304 202-224-5922 202-224-0776 (FAX) 202-224-5903 (TDD) http://hutchison.senate.gov/e-mail.htm	Kay Bailey Hutchison Dallas LB 606 10440 N. Central Expressway Suite 1160 Dallas, Texas 75231 214-361-3500 214-361-3502 (FAX)
<i>Fort Worth Star Telegram</i> Letter to the Editor Paul Harral PO Box 1870 Fort Worth, TX 76116 harral@star-telegram.com	<i>Dallas Morning News</i> Box 655237 Dallas, Texas 75265 fax (972) 263-0456

Investigate the issue at the following:

- <http://www.whitehouse.gov>,
- <http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/legi.html>
- <http://www.dfw.com> (*Star Telegram*)
- <http://www.dallasnews.com> (*Dallas Morning News*)
- <http://www.washingtonpost.com> (*Washington Post*)
- CSPAN (“as it is happening” news channel)

5. Create a poster/collage or write a poem, bumper sticker, t-shirt logo, or current event bulletin board for the classroom stating both sides of the issue.
6. Take a poll of teachers and classmates to get their opinions on the issues and compare their poll to others on the news regarding the same issue.
7. Research the history of immigration policy. See the social studies department chair to reference the book *Ellis Island Interviews* by Peter Morton Coan. Go to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services web site.
8. Spend the first 5 minutes of the class period for students to write a reflection in journals or interactive notebooks.

How does a bill become a law?

1. A person in Congress (either the House of Representatives or the Senate) introduces an idea as a bill.
2. The bill is sent to a committee for discussion and a vote.
3. If they approve, the bill goes to the full house of Congress. They debate and vote on it.
4. One more than half (218 out of 435 representatives or 51 of 100 senators) have to approve.
5. If they approve, the bill goes to the other house of Congress.
6. If they do not approve, then is sent back to the committee who then discuss makes changes. It can then be sent back for approval.
7. If the bill passes the first house (step 3), it goes to the other body of Congress.
8. It goes to a committee that votes to pass or not pass.
9. If it passes by a simple majority, it is sent to the President.
10. If the President signs the bill, it becomes law.
11. If the President vetoes the bill, Congress can override the veto with a 2/3's majority in both houses, and it becomes law. In the Senate, the vote must be 67 of 100; in the House of Representatives, the vote must be 290 of 435.
12. If either house fails to get the vote, the President's veto stands, and the bill does not become a law.

Helpful web resources on the legislative process:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/government/howabillbecomesalaw2.htm>

http://clerkkids.house.gov/laws/bill_begin.html

<http://www.school-house-rock.com/Bill.html>



Lesson 2
Immigration Issues – 2006

Three immigration plans are currently being discussed in Congress which will dramatically change the way in which illegal immigration is dealt with in the United States. The Senate and the House plan may be revised and changed as the bills return to committees for discussion. The three plans are summarized below:

President Bush’s Plan- Three Critical Elements

1. Secure Our Border
 - Increase funding for border security to include another 1,500 new agents and equip agents with cutting-edge technology, infrared cameras, motion sensors, and unmanned aerial vehicles.
 - Install protective vehicle barriers and fencing in urban areas.
 - End the practice of “catch and release” by increasing the number of beds in detention facilities. Expand the use of “expedited removal” to allow non-Mexican illegal immigrants to be sent home more quickly.

2. Strengthen Enforcement of Our Laws in the Interior of Our Country
 - Increase funding for immigration enforcement to bring smugglers, terrorists, gang members, and human traffickers to justice.
 - Double resources dedicated to worksite enforcement.
 - Increase task forces to dismantle document fraud rings.

3. Create a New Temporary Worker Program That Would Not Provide Amnesty
 - Workers would register for legal status on a temporary basis.
 - Workers could apply for citizenship and but not jump ahead of others.
 - Tamper-proof identification cards would be issued.

Web resource: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/immigration/>

The Senate Plan of John McCain and Edward Kennedy (s.1033)

The Senate plan, bipartisan legislation drafted by Senators McCain and Kennedy, has been sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee for review. The current proposal is as follows:

- Illegal immigrants who pay a \$1,000 fine and back taxes would be able to apply for a three-year work visa, renewable for a second three-year period.
- In the fourth year, the visa holder could begin a five-year path toward citizenship.

- A second guest-worker program would open up legal agricultural jobs to 1.5 million undocumented farm workers.
- Green cards could increase by up to 400,000 per year.
- Border patrol agents would increase by 14,000 by the year 2011.
- This bill would NOT make illegal immigrants felons.
- This bill would not provide for the construction of new walls along 700 miles of the southern border of the United States.
- Clergy and other charitable organizations that help illegal immigrants will be exempt from penalties.

Web resources: http://immigration.about.com/b/a/2006_03_28.htm
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/28/AR2006032801665_pf.html

The House Bill sponsored by Representative F. James Sensenbrenner (H.R.4437)

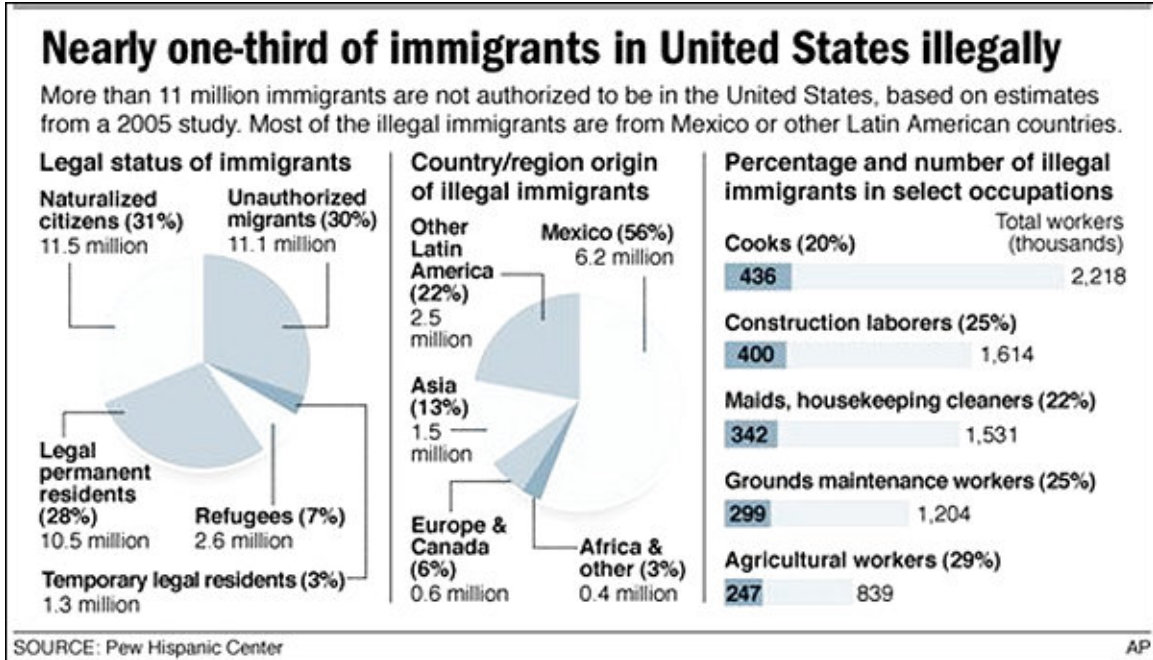
This bill contains three provisions. Outlined below is the provision which relates most specifically to immigration.

H.R.4437 amends the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) with respect to alien smuggling and illegal entry and presence. The bill

- revises the definition of aggravated felony
- provides mandatory minimum sentences on smuggling convictions and expand seizure and forfeiture authority
- makes illegal presence U.S. a crime
- increases penalties for improper U.S. entry and for marriage and immigration-related entrepreneurship fraud
- provides mandatory minimum sentences for aliens convicted of reentry after removal
- imposes on smugglers the same sentences that the aliens they have smuggled received
- includes among smuggling crimes the carrying or use of a firearm during such activity
- revises voluntary departure provisions

Web resource <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d109:HRO4437:@@D&summ2=m&>

Activities for students:



Graph from the Washing Post on March 29, 2006

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/photo/2006/03/29/PH2006032900308.html>

Lesson 3

Legislative and Executive Plans for Immigration: A Summary

	Illegal immigrants in the US	New Immigrants	Border Security	Guest Workers	U.S. Employers	Immigration Penalties
House Bill	Mandatory detention for all non-Mexican illegal immigrants arrested at ports and borders.	No provisions.	More high tech monitoring. More border patrol agents. More fencing barriers installed.	Does not address President Bush's plan for guest workers.	National computer system to verify documentation status of all employees.	Mandatory sentences for smuggling illegal immigrants and for re-entering U.S. after deportation; felony to be in U.S. illegally.
Senate Judiciary Committee bill	Eventual citizenship for illegal immigrants currently in the country. Workers must pay a fine, pay back taxes, have a job and learn English.	Increase the number of green cards each year. Earn legal residence after 6 years.	More high tech monitoring. More border patrol agents (14,000). More fencing.	Eventual citizenship for illegal immigrants currently in the country. Workers must pay a fine, pay back taxes, and have a job.	National computer system to verify documentation status of all employees.	Clergy and other charitable organizations that help illegal immigrants exempt from penalties.
Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist's proposal	Misdemeanor to be in U.S. illegally.	Increase job-based green cards. Increase high-tech worker visas.	No provisions	No provisions	Verify ID and immigration status of employees.	For employers, civil and criminal penalties up to \$20,000 for each illegal immigrant hired. Up to 6 months in jail for hiring illegal's.
President Bush's Plan (not a bill)	Expand "expedited removal" to allow non-Mexican illegal immigrants to be sent home more quickly.		Increase funding. Install vehicle barriers and fencing in urban areas.	Create temporary worker program. Issue tamper-proof ID cards. Register for legal status on a temporary basis.		Increase funding for immigration enforcement. Double resources for worksite enforcement Increase task forces to dismantle fraud rings.

Defining the Terminology

- Illegal Immigrant:** Someone present in the country without authorization. People considered illegal immigrants could enter the United States in two ways: either by sneaking across the border, or by entering the country legally under a temporary visa but then failing to leave once their visa expires.
- Legal Implications:** Living in the United States illegally -- either by sneaking in or by overstaying a visa -- is a violation under the civil code, not the criminal code. However, illegal immigrants can be incarcerated as part of the deportation process. Sneaking across the border is currently a criminal misdemeanor that can result in six months in prison. Immigration legislation passed by the U.S. House in December would make it a felony to live in the United States without authorization.
- Guest Worker Program:** A program that allows foreign workers a legal means to work and live in the United States for a temporary period of time. U.S. law currently includes provisions that allow people to enter the country temporarily to take up work in agricultural and professional sectors of the economy. Most have set ceilings on the number of foreign workers who can be allowed in. U.S. businesses have long bumped up against these ceilings.

David Martin, professor of law at the University of Virginia.

Sources: *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, March 30, 2006, White House Fact Sheet, March 27, 2006, and NPR web at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5303676>, <http://immigration.about.com/b/a/20060328.htm>, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/28/AR2006032801665_pf.html

Understanding the issues and the debate

The two most debated issues are citizenship and border security.

- Citizenship:** The House of Representatives proposes making illegal presence in the U.S. a crime. The Senate proposes a guest-worker program whereby illegal immigrants may earn citizenship by following specific procedures.
- Border Security:** The House of Representatives proposes the construction of new walls along 700 miles of the southern border of the U.S. The Senate proposes virtual security measures and not the construction of walls.
- Timeline:** The current issues and bills will be debated and may change significantly in the ensuing months as amendments are added and both houses of Congress work toward compromise. This process may take months or years to accomplish.
- Teachers and students can stay abreast of the progress by watching CSPAN and by conducting research on the bills at the Library of Congress web site, <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.
- Senator Frist's bill (S2454) may be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/thomas>.
- Senators McCain and Kennedy's bill (S1033) may be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c109:S.1033.IS>.
- Representative Sensenbrenner's bill (H.R.4437) may be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c109:H.R.4437>.



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

100 N. UNIVERSITY DR. / FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76107-1360

MELODY A JOHNSON, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

May 2, 2006

Dear FWISD Employees:

I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to each of you. On Monday, May 1, communities around the nation braced themselves for walkouts and absenteeism as part of a protest to possible federal regulation. Some corporations and school districts felt it necessary to remind their employees of the importance of remaining on the job. Others warned of consequences for absenteeism on that day.

Because the employees of the Fort Worth Independent School District have demonstrated steadfast loyalty and dedication to the students in this community, we felt no need to follow suit. And, on Monday, when some businesses had to shut down, we had fewer absences than normal.

Thank you for being on the job and for the professionalism you continue to show in all that you do. Your very presence does indeed make a difference between a child's success or failure. I applaud your leadership and am grateful for your hard work and extraordinary commitment to the children of your community.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melody Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melody Johnson
Superintendent