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## Statement by Interim Superintendent Vivian Ekchian On Student Response to Marjory Stoneman Douglas Tragedy

S F E C

Feb. 28, 2018

L.A. Unified joins the nation in continuing to mourn for the victims of the tragic school shooting in Parkland, Florida. As part of the emotional recovery process, our District continues to provide students, families and employees with the instructional and mental health supports they need during this difficult time.

We also realize that many students have expressed a desire to join the Parkland survivors and families in communicating their feelings on the issue of gun control. We believe this can serve as an empathetic and teachable moment, allowing us to foster compassionate individuals who will become the leaders of tomorrow. To support this effort, the District has prepared a host of age-appropriate resources that empower students to create a dialogue toward action. We also encourage our schools to honor the 17 lives lost at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland by participating in on-campus activities for 17 minutes at approximately 10 a.m. on March 14, depending on their schedule.

Students have the right to freedom of speech, and they may participate in peaceful dialogue and activities on campus, within parameters set by their administrators. We ask that parents talk to their children and encourage them not to leave campus. Our goal is to provide students with opportunities to express themselves in a safe manner that respects the school environment and all perspectives.

We also ask parents to please monitor their child's social-media activity and behavior and to communicate any concerns to school personnel. By following the principle, "If you see something, say something," students, families and employees can continue working with us as partners in contributing to the safety, security and well-being of our schools.

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