



Dear Rocket Family,

March 15, 2018

As you may be aware, a call has been issued for a statewide teacher walkout that is anticipated to be held on Monday, April 2. All of us will be impacted by a teacher walkout. Therefore, my Leadership Team and I want to communicate what we know at this point in time. Many things remain unknown and we will communicate more as they emerge.

UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES

The John Rex board, the admin team, and faculty members have enjoyed a very positive and productive relationship since our inception. However, because charter schools do not have collective bargaining units (teacher unions), this presents some unique challenges for our teachers as they decide whether or not they will join with other educators in the walkout. Our board has always supported our staff. For example, they are committed to continue paying our teachers substantially higher wages. For example, the base salary for a beginning teacher at Rex is currently ~\$6,000 more than OKCPS. Our board also recognizes excellence in teaching and annually awards bonus stipends to teachers. While our salaries are higher than many other districts, we are still below regional and national averages! But it's not just about salary for our teachers... it is about what is best for all children as well as valuing the education profession.

WE SUPPORT OUR TEACHERS

The John Rex admin team highly values each of our teachers and support staff! We stand with them and believe that it is up to each individual whether or not they participate in the walkout. Their jobs are not in jeopardy should they choose to participate. If some teachers choose to participate, we stand with them. If some choose not to participate, we stand with them equally.

ANTICIPATED WALKOUT

Our admin team and teachers have had open conversations about the anticipated walkout. It is a complex issue and all feel conflicted about it. Our teachers do not like being in this situation. Nevertheless, our teachers have told us that they overwhelmingly support participation in the statewide walkout. We want to affirm that no one on the Rex staff views this situation as a board/admin vs. teacher issue! Truly, our staff is very passionate about the greater issues that impact ALL children such as adequate education funding and the value the profession.

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

There will be a special meeting of the JRCES board of directors on **Monday, March 19 at 7:00PM here at the school**. The agenda will be posted today and it includes an item for consideration and possible vote on a resolution to affirm support for JRCES teachers. You are welcome to attend this public meeting. Public comments will also be included on the agenda. If you wish to share any thoughts, comments, or concerns ahead of time, you may send an email the board at board@johnrexschool.org.

POTENTIAL SCHOOL CLOSURE

We cannot conduct school without a sufficient number of staff members present. This is purely a safety concern. At this time, the number of teachers who have told us they will participate in the walkout will require us to cancel school on April 2. The duration of the closure is unknown at this time. We will communicate more with you as details become available. JRCES is an "hours district" (vs. days). Our longer school days give us excess hours beyond the legal minimum. Taking into account the hours of instruction already missed (i.e. flu and inclement weather) we have 77 extra hours beyond the minimum requirement. If the walkout were to exceed our excess 77 hours, we would have to make up the time missed.

OTHER CONCERNS

Our #1 concern is to protect you and your children from as many negative effects as possible; therefore:

- We will work with the [Regional Food Bank](#) to continue providing food to those students in need through our "Backpack Club." Keystone Food Services has already reached out and has initiated some preliminary plans to do whatever they can to help us.
- We will work with the YMCA as they make preliminary plans to offer childcare for our students. Other resources will emerge. More details will be communicated as they become available.
- The State Department of Education released a valuable [FAQ document](#) this week about testing, etc. <http://www.sde.ok.gov/sde/newsblog/2018-03-14/guidance-schools-potential-teacher-work-stoppage>

Please reach out to others in your Rocket community! We know that our families will step up and take care of each other. Continue to rely on the support of your [John Rex PTA](#) and make every attempt to provide the necessary supports, information, and community resources to all of our families.

Thank you for entrusting your most valuable treasure to us. As always, we appreciate your steadfast support, encouragement, and for choosing John Rex! #wechoosejohnrex

Joe Pierce & the John Rex Leadership Team