



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## My Letter to DOE Chancellor Carranza on Student Walkouts

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL April 23, 2018



Young people are the change we need on gun violence. That's why I wrote to the NYC Department of Education Chancellor asking him not to penalize high school students who participated in last Friday's #nationalwalkout against gun violence.

April 23, 2018

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

NYC Department of Education

Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Carranza:

Last Friday, on the 19th anniversary of the Columbine High School mass shooting, hundreds of brave New York City high school students congregated in my Senate district in Washington Square Park for the National School Walkout. It was a peaceful and inspiring demonstration against gun violence that I was honored to observe. I am writing to urge you not to penalize these students with unexcused absences on their records.

As you know, this country is at a critical juncture on gun laws, largely propelled by the efforts of our youth. As a policymaker in Albany, I know firsthand that student activism is critical to advancing important legislation that will keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people, provide stronger background checks, and ban schoolteachers from being armed. It would be a disservice to the public good, not to mention send a poor message to young people and their families, if New York City students who participated in the National School Walkout were penalized in any way for exercising their First Amendment rights on an issue of such grave concern to New Yorkers as gun violence.

I respectfully request that you expunge any unexcused absences and related penalties from the records of students who walked out on Friday, April 20, 2018. In addition, I ask that you evaluate NYC Department of Education policies on peaceful demonstration and update them to ensure students can demonstrate without fear of discipline. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Brad Hoylman

State Senator

27th District