

Hank Thiele D99 Protestors Statement 12-17-18

For the past two weeks before school as students arrive, there have been between one and six protesters stationed outside North High or South High. Each time, as they have done at other schools in the area, these protesters have actively exercised their right to free speech while on public property.

While some may disagree with their message, tactics or behavior, engaging with the protestors has been unproductive and we are unable to force them to leave a public sidewalk. Our hope is that ignoring them may discourage them from returning; this strategy has been communicated to our students and they have been amazing at handling this sometimes difficult situation. We also appreciate that families and community members have refrained from engaging, organizing, or participating in counter-demonstrations outside of the schools.

Keeping our students safe is our top priority and every morning we have had administrators, many teachers and staff, security, and our school resource officers around students as they arrive. In addition, members of the Downers Grove Police Department, with whom we are in close and regular contact, have brought a strong police presence each day to ensure students are protected at all times. We have also worked closely with the Village of Downers Grove as they have provided additional resources.

We appreciate the outpouring of support from our community, students, staff, and families. We will continue to focus on creating a safe and welcoming start to school each day, regardless of what happens outside in the public space.