



## Communicating During Protest: Creating Space Without Taking a Position

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### **Provide the facts of the situation as they stand currently.**

Provide only information that is factually known at the time without predicting or assuming the next steps. Questions from families or the media may be future-focused (e.g., Will graduation still occur as planned on Saturday?). Keeping responses and statements present-focused provides clarity without antagonizing the protesting groups.

### **Know whether proper procedures were followed.**

It may require a review of the policy manual, but it is important to know if the protest was conducted in accordance with school guidelines. Informing protesters of their rights and responsibilities can open the doorway to additional communication.

### **Find areas of similarities.**

Whether the disagreement is between two student groups, or students and the school, areas of agreement should inform a statement. The area of agreement may be that the groups are engaging in civil discourse, but statements from the school should not divide the groups.

### **Notify groups before issuing a statement.**

Protesting groups include members of your school community and should be treated as such. While they do not have to agree with items released in a statement, they shouldn't be surprised by them either.

### **Determine a communications cadence.**

Will you update audiences on a timed schedule or only when there are updates to the situation? Communicate this in any initial communication so stakeholders know what to expect.

### **Communicate with your entire community as needed.**

Parents will need reassurance that the school is actively monitoring and/or engaging with the situation. The surrounding community may need safety assurances. Students and faculty not involved in the event may need direction regarding disruptions on campus.

