“Woodlawn Walkout”
The Student Voice

The Movement

After the drastic events that took place in Minneapolis, the United States seemed to fall into chaos as questions arose regarding how humane the actions of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement really were. On January 30th students around all the San Antonio School District worked to make their voices heard as peaceful walkouts took place. While many schools participated, I had the opportunity to participate in the Woodlawn Walkout, a walkout organized by the Young Womens Leadership Academy and Jefferson High school. Many interviews were conducted as we followed the student voice and dove into the reasoning behind their participation.





The Student Voice: Thinking Before Acting

Within the days leading up to the walkout, I was able to speak with many students regarding their views on this walkout and noticed a common thread among them, lack of knowledge.

Many students questioned each other as some wondered what the consequences may bring while others argued that the actions were greater than the consequences. “My family is in a weird position right now and I just want to make sure that this doesn't get back to my niece,” a YWLA student commented as her reasoning for doubting her participation, and many agreed as residential status among family members became a primary reason for lack of participation. A thought that also ran through student minds was the effects this might have on graduation for the class of 2026 seniors as news ran of possible class B misdemeanors being received under the acts of truancy and educational disruption, “If I get a class B misdemeanor, it has to bee reported to all my colleges and scholarships.” Other students chose to participate in other ways, providing stickers to students with the words ‘Protect your neighbors, give ICE the boot’ and still others providing pamphlets with information on what to do when finding yourself in a confrontational situation.



Ultimately, a majority participation turn out arose the night before the walkout as the superintendent of SAISD, Dr. Aquino, encouraged students to let their voices be heard as long as parents were informed and students acted responsibly.



The Student Voice: Standing Up for Those Who Can't

Many conservatives viewed the walkouts as a simple excuse for students to skip school, but many students argued otherwise. During the walkouts, many of the interviews conducted answered many questions as to why students wanted to participate. "I am doing this for my parents and cousins, but especially for my dad," stated a student, expressing the importance of the issue as she stood along with her sister during the walkout.



Students also showed their actions to be not just influenced by family members but sheer acts of compassion as they spoke about doing this for "the families that have been split up, and for those kids that are my age and suffering in ways I could not imagine." A walkout that could be easily brushed off became more impact as students adjusted themselves and brought forth their situations at home regarding their families and friends, wanting a quiet story to be shown in its truth. There was no violence involved during this protest, just the simple resounding echo of students wanting the oppressed to be known.

The actions that have taken place since the beginning of the year have caused a lot of attention, but most importantly a sense of unity among students as they long to hear the voices of the people whom have been shut down by the land of the free. The students of today, the generation of tomorrow, walked in unity to seek a voice for those who don't have one.