

A Message from the Newtown Federation of Teachers to the Broward County Community

To the teachers, school staff, students and Broward County community:

After the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, you were one of the many places from around the country that reached out to offer support to the Newtown, Conn., community. We never imagined that it would be our place to return that support five years later. Our hearts are breaking for your teachers, staff, students and parents, and the rest of your community, as you begin to grapple with the reality of the tragedy you have endured.

Your losses from the events of Feb. 14 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School are immeasurable. The date 2/14 will forever change each of you, just as 12/14 forever changed us. Emotions and responses to the event will be vast and deep, and everyone's reaction will differ. This range of emotions will add to the complexity and challenge of moving forward as a district, for your students and for each other.

While our experience is different from yours, we all share your pain, your heartbreak, your questions and your anger. We know what it feels like to have children, teachers and school staff taken from us in an instant. We know how it feels to return to school, to the children and colleagues who remain, wondering how to move forward from here. As you navigate this indescribable journey, please know that, even though there is no handbook, we have been where you are. Sadly, it is an exclusive club we belong to. There aren't too many places to turn. Never forget that we are here for you, whatever you need from us, whenever you are ready.

We must unite in seeking common ground for change. Our goal—our prayer—is that never again will another school district have to face the daunting task of rebuilding after such a tragedy. From our collective heartbreak we need to build on the collective goodness in our schools and communities. We must make it clear that we will not stand in silence, allowing these horrors to be visited on our schools and communities time and time again. We will be right beside you as activists to demand an end to gun massacres in our schools.

With love, and in solidarity,

Tom Kuroski,

PRESIDENT OF THE NEWTOWN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS,
AND NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER,

*And the Members of the Newtown Federation of Teachers,
American Federation of Teachers*