

# Pittsburgh: high school students rally outside school board building

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Some 150 high school students from more than dozen Pittsburgh-area schools took part in a spirited rally outside the school board building to protest the looming war with Iraq. The demonstration was part of a student day of action against the war.

The students presented petitions calling on the school board to pass a resolution in opposition to the war. The students will formally present their request at a March 17 school board meeting.

Some 25 students at the city's school for the arts walked out despite being told that they would be suspended for a day. At other area high schools, students were told they would be suspended for three days. Many Schenley High students were planning to walk out in defiance of the suspension threat, but were physically prevented from leaving the building by security guards stationed at every door.

Despite the peaceful and organized nature of the rally, there was a large police presence. About a dozen uniformed officers and many plainclothes officers and school officials kept an eye on the event. School security videoed the entire rally, taking care to film the face of every individual who took part.

Stefan, Amir and Paige from Schenley High School all agreed that the real reason for the war was oil. "This war is against a nation that poses no threat to us, but it just so happens to have the second largest oil deposits," said Stefan.

"The only reason the US is fighting this war is to get control of Iraq's oil," agreed Amir. "I don't want to lose any of my friends to any false causes."

Eric, a senior from East Allegheny High School, said, "I think all acts of war are terrorism. I know there were many innocent people killed in the US from terrorism. But what the US is proposing to do will mean many, many more innocent people being killed."

Paula, a senior from Schenley, took strong exception to Bush's dismissal of the international protests against the war on February 15 and 16. "When he says the protests do not affect his decision, he is saying what the people think does not matter, that our vote and our voice do not matter.

"I don't like the way Bush is shoving this down our throats. One minute we are at war in Afghanistan and the next minute it is Iraq, without showing any connection between the two."

Many of the students linked the war plans with the cuts in education and other social programs. "I know cuts in education are not directly a result of the war, but are linked to the economy," said Leah. "But the war is affecting the economy and that is affecting education."

Many students took copies of the *World Socialist Web Site* open letter to students for themselves and to pass around to others.



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